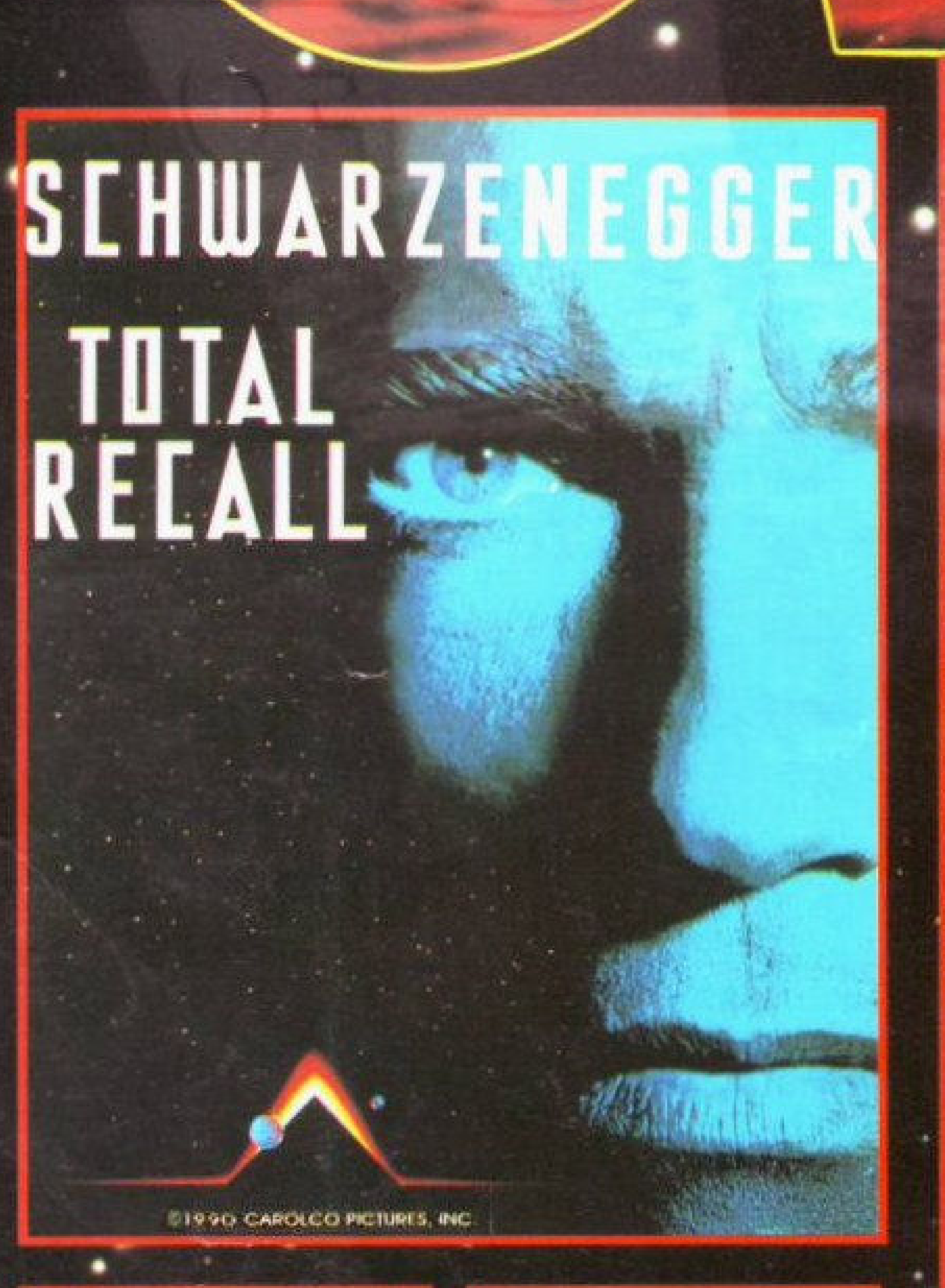

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An Amiga can learn by Dynamic Artificial Non Intelligence
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Your Amiga gets some Artificial Intelligence
Lemmings
Suicidally addictive playable demo of Psygnosis' surprise hit of the year
Documentation on Page 161
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Imageworks
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DISCOVER The best games of 1990
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It's Interphase
It's got an 88% rating
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It's the complete game on disk
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NO COVERDISKS?
Then ask for them from your newsagent
● Spindizzy, Strider
Powermonger and
world of robotics
of prizes ● Ray
Line of Fire,
xplore the
JUST GOT
01
770957 486998

POWER







As
Doug Quaid
you have been
haunted by recurring
dreams of another life on Mars.
You are drawn to Rekall Incorporated, a unique travel service specializing in implanting fantasies into the minds of those who desire to turn their dreams into reality.

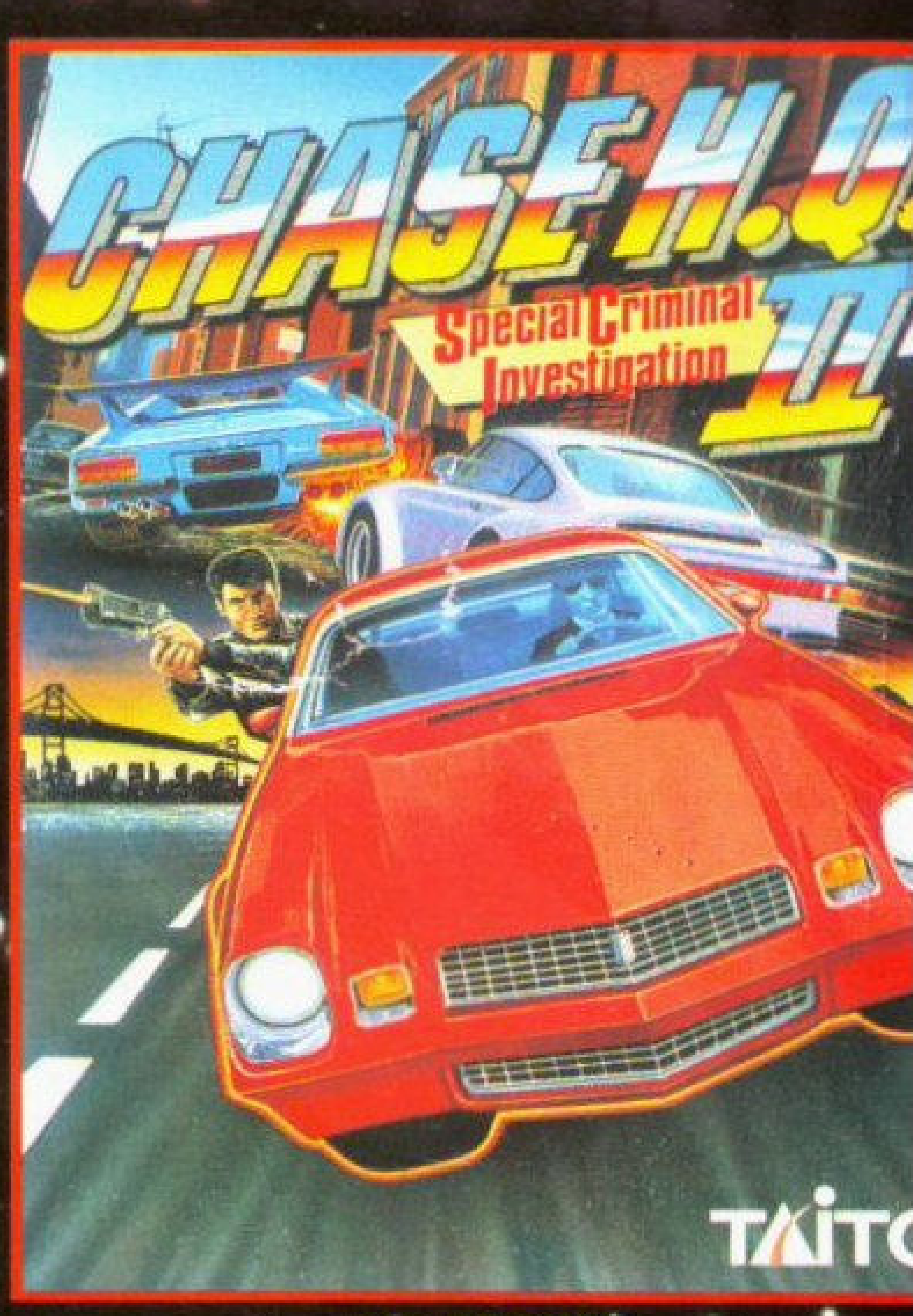
THE EGO TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Experience
the horror as your dreams
turn into hideous nightmares. Suddenly your every move is monitored by would-be assasins. You discover the surreal truth -

YOU'RE NOT YOU - YOU'RE ME

You
must travel
to Mars to discover
your true identity - your mission
is now a journey of non-stop action, strange mutants, futuristic vehicles and a startling array of weaponry all captured in superbly executed graphics and a game play that compliments the success of the year's top movie.

CHASE HQ 2 Special Criminal Investigatio
continuing where CHASE HQ left off.
The Arcade thriller takes you from the bright lights
Paris to the rugged terrain of th Sahara.
Your mission is to track down,
chase and apprehend
the dangerous
criminals.

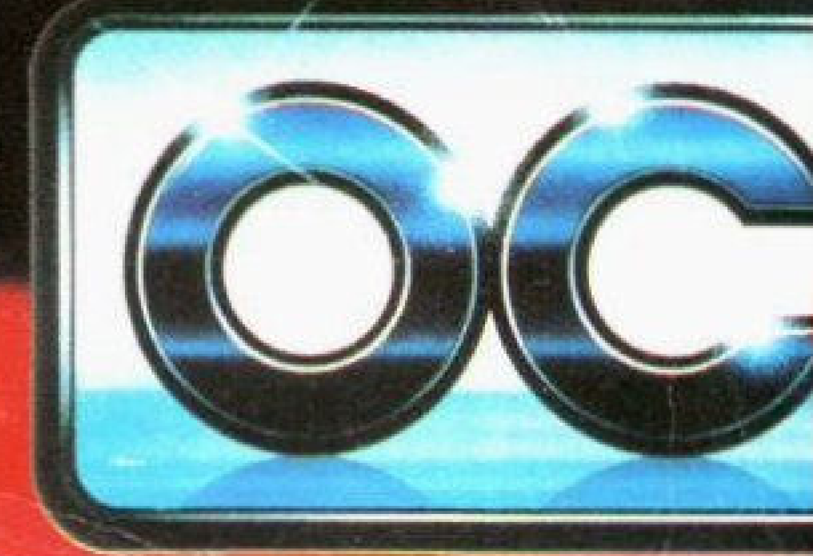


It's FASTER
Explosive power sends
you bulleting through various terrains -
hold the line or plough the fields!

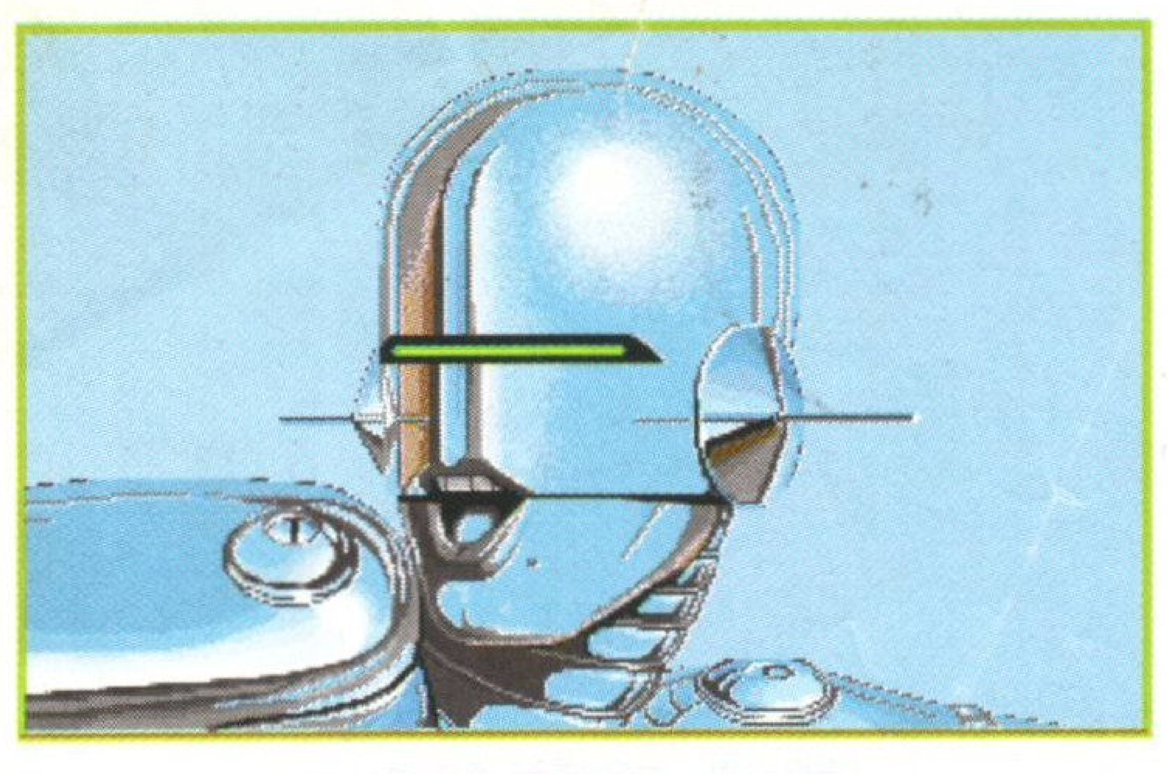
It's TOUGHER
The criminals wield some
heavy hardware - but so do you!
You can shoot but you must dodge their flak...
heavy gunfire, trucks unloading their cargo onto yo
bonnet... it's the meanest pursuit game to hit the
micro screen.



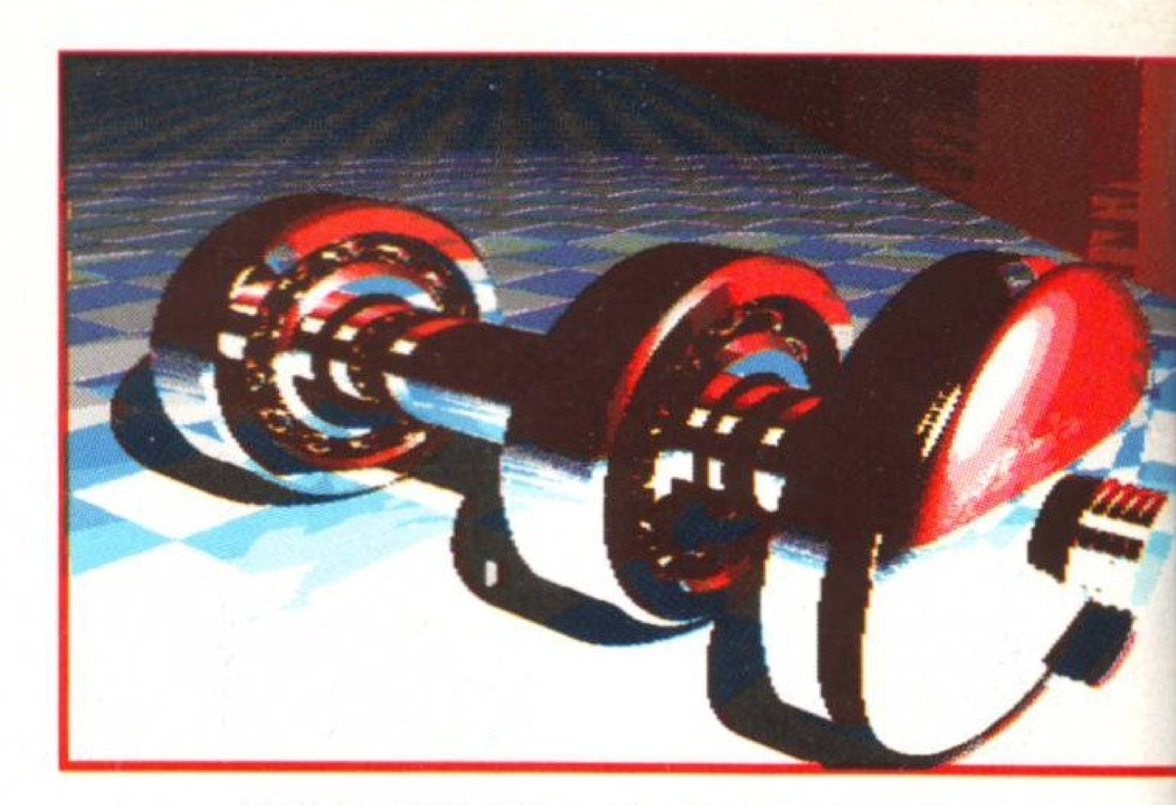




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Competitions

AMIGA FORMAT 18 JAN 1991

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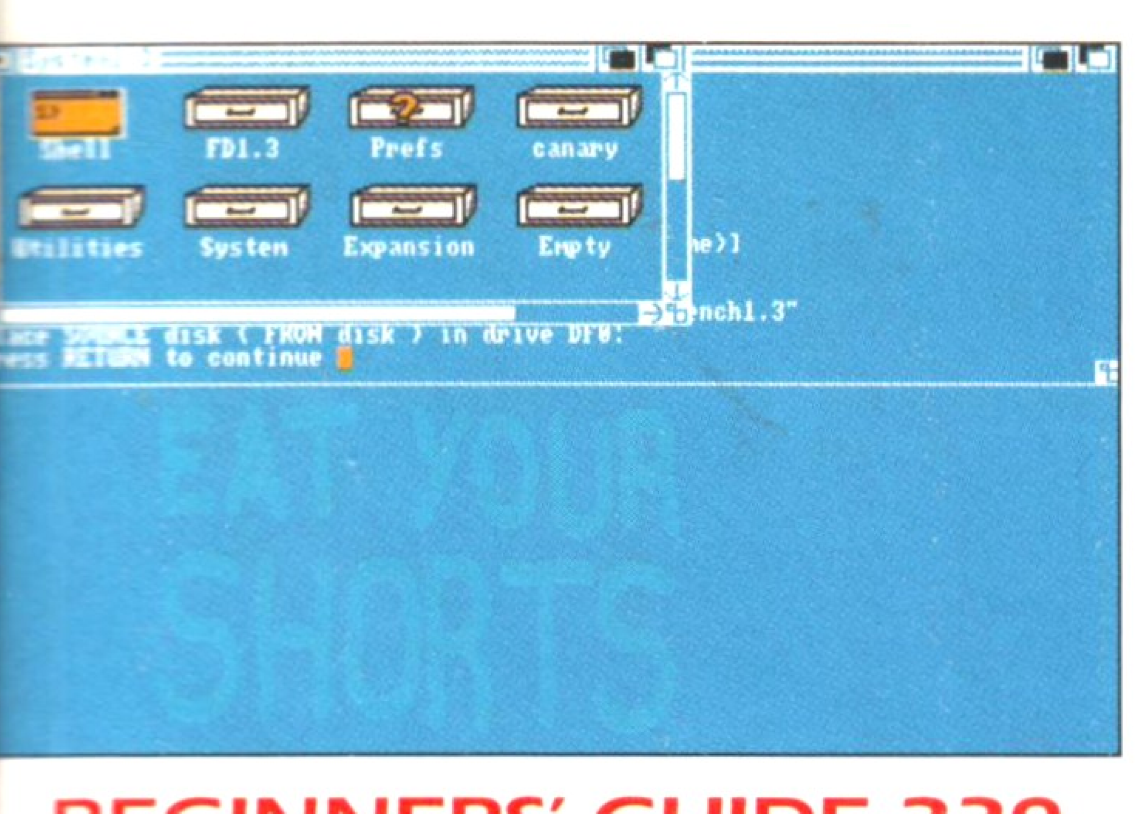
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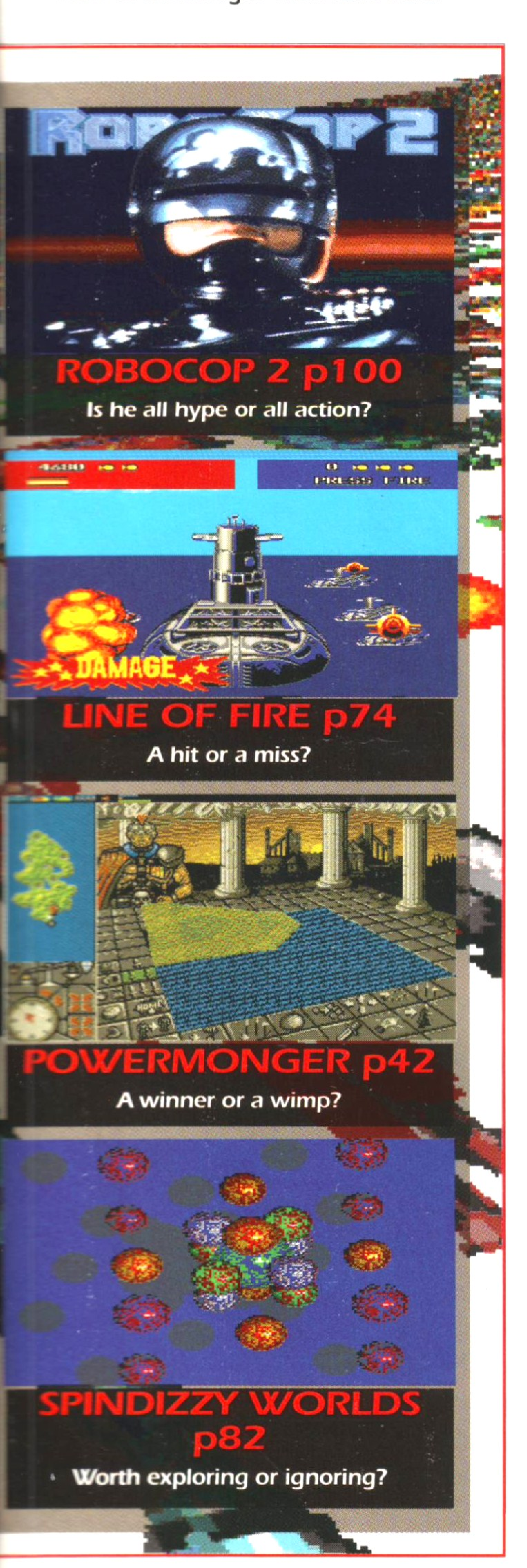
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New to the Amiga? Then start here!



ROBOCOP 2 p100

Is he all hype or all action?

LINE OF FIRE p74

A hit or a miss?

POWERMONGER p42

A winner or a wimp?

SPINDIZZY WORLDS p82

Worth exploring or ignoring?

SUBSCRIBE! P.154

If you read *Amiga Format* every month, why not make sure of your copy by getting it delivered straight to your door? Save hassle, save money and get a free game, too! See Page 154 for details! Also, take advantage of our Mail Order bargains.

MAIL ORDER P.274



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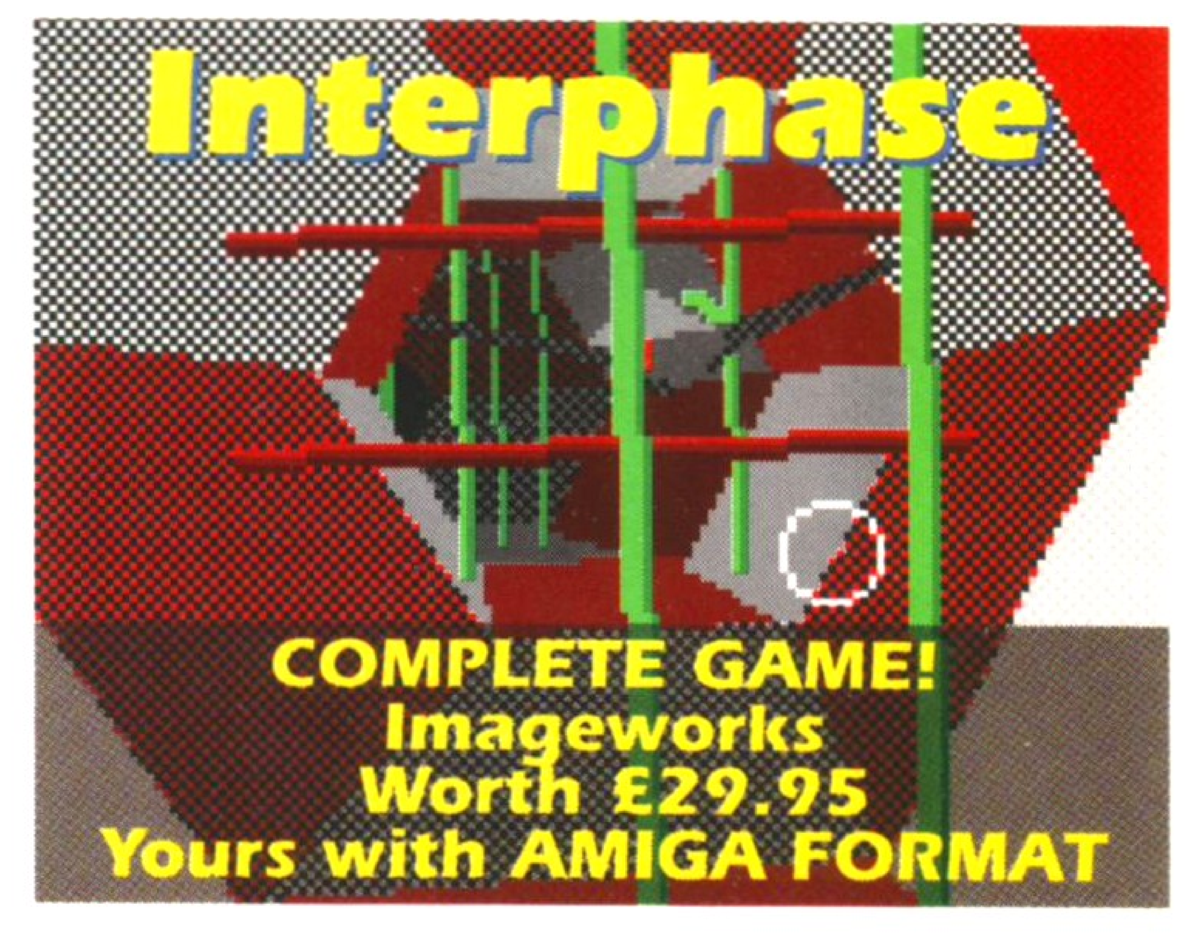
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REVIEWED

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TOTAL RECALL
You and Arnie can blast and explore in Ocean's playable demo.

LEMMINGS
Destined to be a huge hit, this playable demo from Psygnosis will have you laughing your socks off and dying to get the full game.

ELIZA
Be amazed by your Amiga's intelligence.

NIALL
Teach your Amiga to talk back to you.

PIC OF THE MONTH
Dynamite ducks, innit!

INTERPHASE COMPLETE GAME
In an extraordinary departure, we're giving away a whole full-price game from Mirrorsoft. Full details on how to play and tips for success are in a special four-page pull-out on Pages 173-176

BIP
Wild flying and dogfighting in the sky.

ILINIOS
A useful label printer.

MIDI EQUALISE
Graphic equaliser for MIDI.

CYCLEDELIC
Blow your mind with some freaky graphics music.


Hard Dr
DRIVE HARDER
0:18
40
Barriers
Track
Objects
New Object
New Segment
New Barrier
Demo Drive
Load
Save
New
Quit
Set Start
Set Finish
Set Checkpoint
Set Returnpoint
Delete
View
TENGEN
The Name in Coin-Op Conversions



ivin' II™
STUNT
A year ago, *Hard Drivin'* shook the world. Now buckle up and step on the gas as *Hard Drivin' II*, the sequel, streaks onto your screen.
Hold on tight as you roar round four thrilling new circuits, or build your own using the unique Track Editor. Once designed, a computer generated view of the new circuit will appear so that you can memorise your route and its hazards. Now you can test your skills on a really mind-blowing stunt track!
And there's more! Link your computer to a friend's Amiga, Atari ST or IBM PC for a head to head race to the finish. If you're lagging behind, go for gold and boost your speed with Nitro Injection – guaranteed to leave the opposition standing.
Hard Drivin' II is faster, meaner and even better looking than the award winning original.
Hard Drivin' II – Drive Harder!
Hard Drivin'
The fantastic sequel to HARD DRIVIN'
DOMARK
Available on: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC 3.5" & 5.25" Programmed by: Jürgen Friedrich
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Published by Domark Software Ltd, Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR Tel: 081-780 2224
Amiga & Atari ST Screenshots



FEEL THE POWER...
S.T.U.N. RUNNER
TM
A STUNning coin-op – now a STUNning computer game...
Grasp the controls and enter the awesome three-dimensional world of the S.T.U.N. Runner. Travel ahead in time to the 21st Century and experience the thrills of racing at speeds of over 900 miles per hour!
Exhilarating.... Challenging. The S.T.U.N. Tunnel Network leaves you gasping. Like a bobsled race you can increase your speed by riding the outer walls of the tunnel. Blast armoured drones and Mag Cycles out of your way and hit the boost pads for massive injections of speed. These catapult you to warp-speeds – so fast that you appear transparent and can even pass through enemy vehicles unharmed.
Complete the various challenge screens and race through the S.T.U.N. Network towards the 'Ultimate Challenge'.
FEEL THE POWER!
Available on: IBM PC 3.5" & 5.25", Atari ST, Amiga, Commodore 64 (cassette, disk) Amstrad (cassette, disk) Spectrum +3, Spectrum 48/128
Programmed by: The Kremlin
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Published by Domark Software Ltd, Ferry House, 51/57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR Tel: +44(0)81-780 2224
IBM PC (EGA) Screenshots
TENGEN
The Name in Coin-Op Conversions
DOMARK

FINE ART AMIGA

If you've never been to the National Portrait Gallery in St Martin's Place, London, then an event there from December 15-22 is the perfect excuse. Young artist Julie Myers will be there (except for the Thursday) with her Amiga and digitising set-up to 'modify' some old master portraits. So if you want to see what the Amiga can do in such illustrious surroundings, why not drop in and have a look?

SUNRIZE SOUND OFF

SunRize Industries, best known for their sound sampler Perfect Sound, have announced details of their forthcoming "Audio for Video Post Production System." The system consists of both hardware and software: the hardware is one of two cards that plug into the Amiga 2000 or 3000. The two cards differ in that one is a 12-bit sampler, the other a 16-bit one which apparently gives "CD quality" sound. No prices for the systems have been announced yet, but we'll keep you posted.

SunRize have also announced that their Perfect Sound 3 hardware, costing £59.95, is compatible with the *Audiomaster III* software from Oxxi-Aegis. This was not the case with *Audiomaster II* though, so watch out for the difference. Perfect Sound is available in the UK from HB Marketing.

☎ SunRize 0101 408 374 4962
☎ HB Marketing 0753 686000

CLUB FOR LEARNERS

The Educational Software Club has a self-explanatory name – it's a club aimed at providing educational software and accessories. Their catalogue of educational programs currently stands at over 70 titles and they have now announced they will be supplying expansion disks for *Fun School 3*. The data is being collected from members of the club and will be sold at £3 for each disk or exchanged free to those who send in their own data.

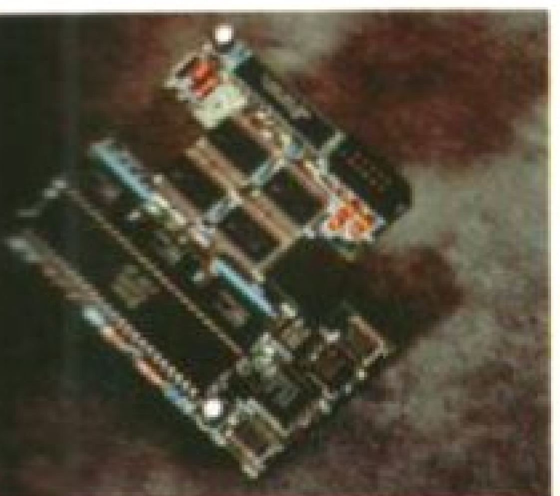
☎ ESC 0702 600557

SOUND EXPRESS

In Issue 16 we reviewed Sound Express, an entry-level sampler, and said it was distributed by IDG, whereas in fact it is from Harlequin, who can be contacted on 0908 560040.

FAST AND FLICKER FREE

ICD have launched two unconventional gadgets, both for the A500, A1000 or A2000. The first is the AdSpeed, an accelerator card. It has a faster version of the standard 68000 processor, so there shouldn't be many software compatibility problems.



AdSpeed runs at 14.3 MHz – twice the speed of a standard Amiga – uses 32K of high speed static RAM to get the most out of the processor and costs $349.95.

The other product is a flicker fixer card. It doesn't occupy the video slot in an A2000, leaving it free for other uses. Called the Flicker Free Video it needs a multi-sync monitor to achieve a perfect, flawless display of interlaced graphics. It sells for $499.95.

AMIGA RACES AHEAD ON ALL FRONTS

- **Over 2 million Amigas sold worldwide and over 500,000 A500s in UK**
- **A2000 to be relaunched as graphics workstation**
- **Commodore Show hailed as great success**
- **More details of new A1500 bundle**

The Amiga's success both in the UK and worldwide has been confirmed by two landmarks surpassed during November, with the number of Amigas made passing the 2 million mark and half a million A500s bought in the UK alone.

The Amiga has now comfortably overtaken the Atari ST as the leading 16-bit computer, a position that is expected to be consolidated over the Christmas period as Commodore's attractive bundles sell out.



Further details are now emerging about the new A1500 Pack: it will include the highly-acclaimed *Battle Chess* from EA.

The latest bundle, the A1500, is an A2000 look-a-like with twin internal disk drives, a monitor and one megabyte of memory priced at £999, (News, Issue 17). New details now emerging reveal that the acclaimed animated chess game from Electronic Arts, *Battle Chess*, will also be included and joining *Amiga Format*'s very own book, *Get the Most Out of Your Amiga*, is an A-Z of Computer Jargon.

The A1500 has put question marks over the future of the A2000, but Commodore have now revealed that it will be relaunched in the New Year as a graphics workstation with a hard disk as standard. What other software and hardware will be bundled with it is still undecided but one strong possibility is that it will be fitted with the full Enhanced Chip Set and include Workbench 2 and the multimedia authoring system *AmigaVision*.

The bright future for the Amiga was highlighted by the healthy turnout at the Commodore Show during November. One exciting rumour suggested that there may be as many as twelve Amiga 24-bit 'True Colour' cards (see Graphics, Issue 17) around by this time next year.

Over 14,000 visitors attended the show over the three days it ran and spent over £100,000. Commodore's national sales manager Kelly Sumner commented "I have attended 14 of the 15 Commodore shows and this has certainly been the most successful to date... and we are firmly committed to continuing the show".

CDTV ENCOUNTERS FURTHER DELAY

Those of you waiting eagerly to find out if you're one of the lucky CDTV field testers from the competition in the November issue are going to have to wait a while longer — but we haven't forgotten you. The launch of the field test has been put back to January with the full launch going ahead in March. We are currently analysing the forms that thousands of you returned to us and it's likely that in addition to the five promised CDTVs from Commodore they will be contacting others on the list — we'll keep you posted.

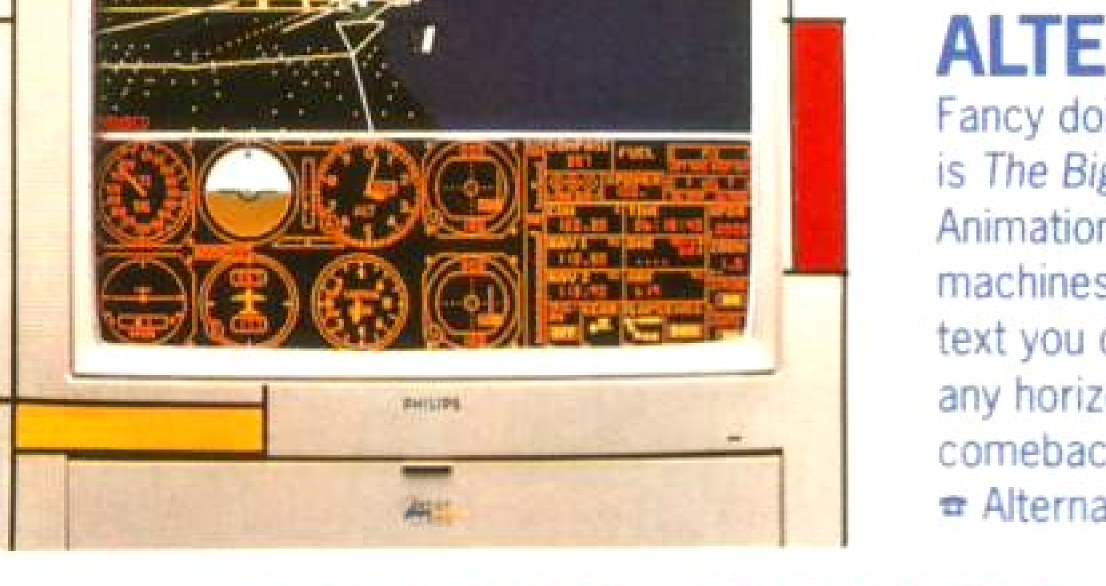
UK GETS GOLDEN IMAGE

There's a new range of peripherals from Taiwan arriving in the UK under the name of Golden Image. We've already told you about one mouse they produce, but now their full range is to be available. As well as a standard replacement mouse they produce an optical mouse, RAM expansions for both the A500 and A2000, second disk drives and a hand scanner.

Golden Image
☎ 081 518 7373

MONDRIAN MONITOR

Philips have come up with a novel idea in monitor design, the Artist Series, where a limited edition of their monitor the CM8833/II is designed in the style of the Dutch artist Piet Mondrian. Apart from the attractive design the monitor offers a 14-inch screen, stereo speakers and earphone socket. The monitor is available from Silica Systems or you could try winning one on Page 253.
☎ Silica Systems 081 309 1111

ADDRESS CHANGE

European Peripheral Distribution (see review of their Baseboard on Page 236) have moved to 34-36 West End Arcade, Upper Parliament St, Nottingham NG1 6JZ.
☎ EPD 0602 502255

ALTERNATIVE SCROLLING

Fancy doing some scrolly text? Then what you need is *The Big Alternative Scroller* from well-respected Animation firm Alternative Image. It runs on one Meg machines and using available fonts it can scroll any text you care to type in at nine different speeds at any horizontal or vertical angle. Scrolly text makes a comeback at £50.
☎ Alternative Image 0533 440041

DUALLING INTERFACE

Cumana have launched a two-in-one interface for A500 owners that plugs into the expansion slot under the keyboard and provides an extra half Meg of memory and an MFM ST506 hard disk interface for £159.95. It also has a modified expansion slot cover, enabling hard disk cables to come out and access to the memory's on/off.
☎ Cumana 0483 503121



PROFESSIONAL PAGE UPDATE

Professional Page 2.0 will have many new features to make it the new standard for Desk Top Publishing on the Amiga. To speed up the process of learning how to use it, a tutorial video cassette is included.

The exciting new bits are a Pantone Matching System (Pantone is widely used to make sure that colours are of the correct hue and intensity) and 24-bit graphics will be able to be used within documents for full-colour, excellent-quality separations.

The program will also have a built-in word processor with a 90,000-word dictionary (no more swapping to alter a piece of text). Tracking controls for text will be included, to give fine tuning for the spacing of words. *Professional Page 2.0* costs $395. Review soon.
☎ Gold Disk 0101 213 3205080

AUTHOR'S RIGHTS

If you're a programmer and you've never heard of the Society of Software Authors, then you could be missing out on crucial information to your career. Your chance to rectify that is by attending the SSA's second developers' conference in Bournemouth on 26th January. The venue and speakers are yet to be finalised but tickets are being issued on a first come, first served basis. For more details on the conference or the SSA contact Nalin Sharma on 081 503 2521 or at The Society of Software Authors, PO Box 598, Bournemouth BH6 3YB.

YOUR OWN TV CHART SHOW

The Shirekilo Video Caption Designer was developed from the software used for the titling effects featured in ITV's Chart Show programme. It needs a genlock device in order to mix video signals with Amiga screens. The program has over 50 screen transitions like wipes, fades and blinds.

VCD can scroll images horizontally or vertically, and can write text in any font or size. Graphics screens can be imported. A real time clock can also be displayed, and the whole shebang will work in any graphic mode from low res to HAM. The software can be controlled from external controllers via the RS232 or joystick ports. It's priced at £199.95.
Maze Technology, 081 5565620

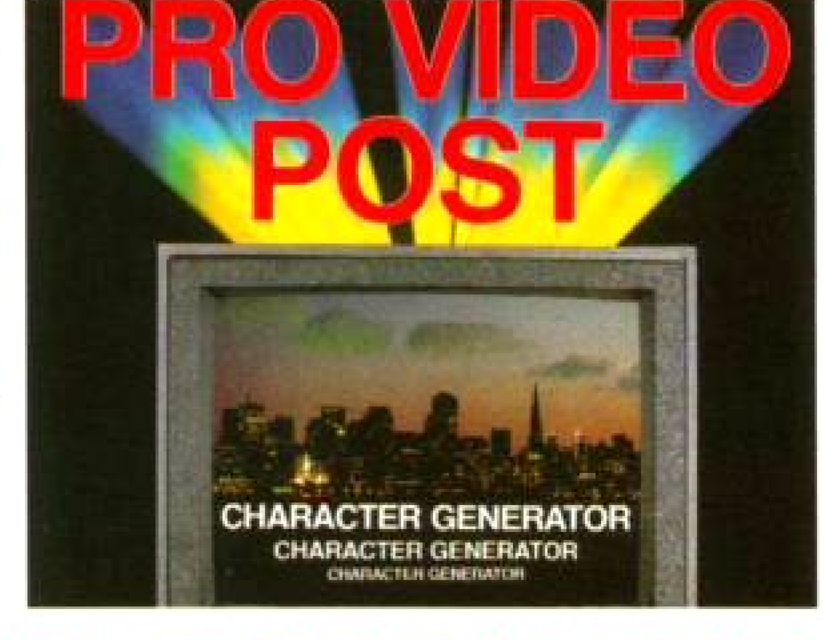
STRICTLY CHRISTMAS

Strictly PD are running a Christmas raffle just for you, which you an take advantage of if you're reading this before Christmas. Any order over £5 received from *Amiga Format* readers before December 25th will go into a raffle to win a first prize of a year's supply of *AF* and two second prizes of 10 PD disks.
Strictly PD, 11 York Place, Brandon Hill, Hotwells, Bristol BS1 5UT

VIDEO SHOT THE SHEREFF

Shereff Systems have released a PAL version of their video titling software *Pro Video Post*. It can do such wonderful things as have a full overscan screen size of 720 horizontal pixels by 480 scan lines, anti-aliased fonts, 100 real time transitions like peel, paste, corner pulls and flip. It also does 83 digital video effects like zoom, tilt, rotate, blow up and mosaic, has picture manipulation routines for resizing, slanting, rotating, tilting, re-mapping and building new pictures.

To use PVP you're going to need 1 Meg of chip RAM and 2 Megs of fast RAM and to shell out $399.95 for the PAL version. Alternatively check with Shereff's UK distributor, HB Marketing, who sell it for £234.74.
☎ Shereff Systems 0101 503 626 2022
☎ HB Marketing 0753 686000



MIXING IT WITH VIDEO

Syntronix Systems specialise in producing converters to change video information from one form to another. They have developed four products for Amiga owners.

The lowest priced is an RGB splitter for colour digitizers and colour cameras. Priced at £49.95, it can separate the red, green and blue elements from a PAL composite colour signal for use in mono video digitizers like DigiView. A similar device works with Y/C input, which means that there's less degradation than a PAL signal. It's priced at £59.95.

Then there's the RGB-PAL converter, which can turn the RGB output of an Amiga into a PAL composite colour video signal. This is more expensive at £179.95, but offers an excellent signal – much superior than Commodore's modulator.

Finally comes the Component Recording system. This is for writing single Amiga frames out through a professional quality RGB connector, for recording on a Super VHS or Hi8 video recorders at Y/C level. This retails at £199.95.
☎ Syntronix Systems 0831 470555.

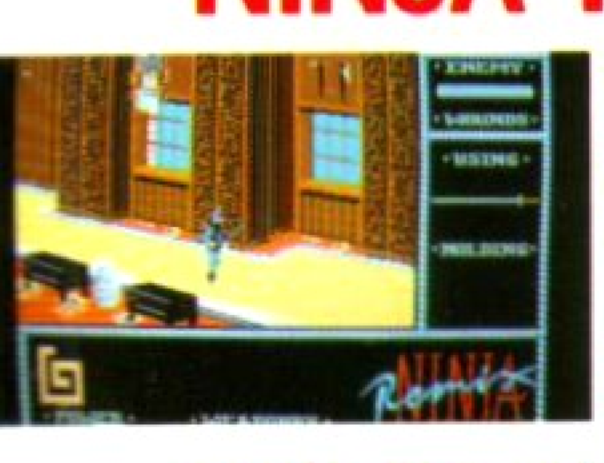
CANNY SCANNER

The Geniscan hand-scanner from Datel Electronics has been updated with a new interface and software to give even better quality images. The interface has a custom chip in it and the software now has an extended buffer, lets you merge two scans together and has extra commands. *Photon Paint Illustrator* is also included and the whole kit and caboodle costs £169.99.
☎ Datel Electronics 0782 744707

SHOP TALK

Mail order firm Digitec have opened a retail shop so that you can drop in in person to buy things. They're currently running several special offers to celebrate the opening and have also started a PD library. So if you're in the Derby area, why not pay them a visit?
Digitec, 23 Balmoral Road, Borrowash, Derby DE7 3FZ ☎ 0332 671000

NINJA REMIXED



System 3 were unhappy with the reception of Amiga *Last Ninja 2*. They have now taken the same gameplay elements that made the game a total classic on the C64 and literally 're-mixed' the entire game. With a new control system and massively better graphics the game should be hitting the shops soon. Look for the full review in next month's Screenplay pages.

LICENCE TERMINATED

Ocean have signed on the dotted line to make the game of the film *Terminator 2*. The original *Terminator* movie (starring Arnold Schwarzenegger in the bad guy title role) was never licensed but achieved massive success at the box office, on video and as a cult hit.

The sequel is due to be released in the summer of '91, and with a budget of $60 million will probably make even bigger waves. To cash in, Ocean are expected to release the game in the late summer or early autumn of next year.

KUMA'S FINE SPREAD

The *K-Spread 3* spreadsheet program is finished. This features a wide range of file types for importing old data – DIF, ASCII, Lotus.WKS and Symphony.WRK files can all be used. The program recognises whether data is in text or numeric form, and areas of sheets can be made into templates. *K-Spread 3* costs £79.95.

K-Spread 4 is nearing completion. This will include the new standard features above but also has macroing facilities. Which will mean that you can store commonly used command sequences and call them up at the press of a few keys. It will also include comprehensive graphic displays of statistics which change as you alter or input information. *K-Spread 4* will be available soon at a price of £99.95.

☎ Kuma Computers on 0734 844335.

SECOND HELPER

Inovatronics has released the HyperHelpers package at $59.95. This includes a Hypertext help system called DosHelp that can inform the curious and frustrated of many aspects of Workbench 2.0, from setting up the Preferences to understanding the C: directory.

There are two other utilities in the system. Run-N-Play allows investigation of unknown files: if a picture is selected it will display, a sound will be played, a text file put into an editor for examination and so on. Launch Pad is a small window that sits on the front of Workbench and contains a list of your favourite programs. Clicking on a name in a window will run the program, without delving through masses of windows and directories.

☎ Inovatronics 0101 214 3404991

COMPUTER GRAPHICS '90

GRAPHICS EDITOR BRIAN LARKMAN REPORTS FROM ALEXANDRA PALACE

Expecting the usual boring and rather jaded Commodore stand, I was shocked to find the area buzzing with excitement. What's more there were Amigas all over the rest of the exhibition as well.

The arrival of the A3000, the A3500 (a 'Tower System' version) and CDTV plus the high-profile presence of multimedia in the Mac and PC world was bound to have an effect on our favourite company – but excitement? Never! Still, there it was – excitement about the new machines, excitement about the multimedia buzzword, excitement about new software – *X-Cad 3D, IGOR, ProPage 2.0, Softoons* – and, near at hand on the Amiga Centre Scotland stand, great excitement about the Harlequin 24-bit colour card (Graphics, Issue 17).

The main thrust of the Commodore stand was – surprise, surprise – multimedia. In a sense, the Amiga 3000 as a multimedia engine is only half the equation, for the real market is CDTV, or rather Interactive CD players in general. The 3000 is, in effect, Commodore's multimedia 'Camcorder', to their CDTV 'VCR'. Lots of people can afford to buy the 'player' even if they can't manage the 'camera' just yet.

Amigas running the new *AmigaVision* software represented almost half the machines on the stand. Judging from this showing they will inevitably play an important part in developing interactive CD software, especially for CDTV, allowing almost anyone to use multimedia to put across their game, education, travelogue etc. Nevertheless it is CDTV that will make multimedia really work and be consumed by the punters – so it should have been on show. Never mind, there was lots more.

MODELLING

3D modelling seems to be a real growth area these days. As if *3D Pro, Real3D, Imagine* and *Lightwave 3D* (see Graphics, Page 149) were not enough for one year, Palace Software launched *IGOR* at the CG show. Designed to produce 3D objects and animations for rendering on high-end graphics systems the price might come as a bit of a shock – £3000 – and that is just for non-rendering software that only works on an Amiga 3000 with 8 Meg. The importance of *IGOR* is that a serious developer regards the A3000 as a suitable machine on which to launch such a high level product for the professional market.

Engineers and architects have quite a different set of requirements that can be best described as 3D CAD. *X-CAD*, for some time now the fastest and best-equipped CAD system on the Amiga, is about to burst into the third dimension. Like *IGOR* it is 'just' a modelling system, designed, if necessary, to send data for rendering to *Sculpt* and *Turbo Silver*. The growth of Pixar's RenderMan standard (Graphics, Page 143) should ensure that as an option too. More news soon.

ALSO SEEN

Away from the Commodore stand, the biggest surprise was the use of Amigas by Symbolics (0494 443711), one of the real big boys who charge £42,000 for a card to fit in a Mac! The Amiga, connected by RS232, can be used for its sound characteristics by all Symbolics systems running *S-Sounds* software. When an animation is being set up that needs to be synched to sound, a rough-out of the soundtrack is digitised using Mastersound (though any similar program that will produce IFF 8SVX samples will work).

W Industries are also using the Amiga's sound for their Virtuality virtual reality products 'as seen on Tomorrow's World' and pictured here. Without doubt you will be hearing more of this system in these pages!

Other Amiga products seen were Artbeat's *Simpatica* single-frame video recording system (reviewed on Page 231), G2's Videocenter+ and Broadcast Videocenter genlocking equipment, Gold Disk's substantially upgraded *Professional Page 2.0* DTP program (review soon) and Amiga Centre Scotland's Harlequin 32-bit Framebuffer (more details of this in Graphics, next issue).



THE *AMIGA FORMAT* SOFTWARE CHART

Position	Last Month	Title	Publisher	Price	AF Rating
1	(-)	F19 Stealth Fighter	MicroProse	£29.99	FG91%
2	(2)	Kick Off 2	Anco	£24.99	FG94%
3	(1)	Corporation	Core Design	£24.99	80%
4	(22)	Gremlins 2	Elite	£24.99	79%
5	(11)	Turrican	Rainbow Arts	£19.99	88%
6	(5)	Midnight Resistance	Ocean	£24.99	69%
7	(9)	Days of Thunder	Mindscape	£24.99	48%
8	(7)	F29 Retaliator	Ocean	£24.99	FG92%
9	(-)	The Spy Who Loved Me	Domark	£24.99	80%
10	(-)	Killing Game Show	Psygnosis	£24.99	FG92%
11	(10)	Operation Stealth	US Gold	£24.99	FG90%
12	(3)	Shadow of the Beast 2	Psygnosis	£34.95	87%
13	(-)	Cadaver	Imageworks	£24.99	83%
14	(25)	TNT	Domark	£24.99	Compilation
15	(6)	Shadow Warriors	Ocean	£24.99	42%
16	(20)	Back to the Future 2	Imageworks	£24.99	38%
17	(-)	Indianapolis 500	Electronic Arts	£24.99	FG92%
18	(4)	Wings	Cinemaware	£29.99	79%
19	(8)	Lost Patrol	Ocean	£24.99	79%
20	(-)	Supremacy	Virgin	£29.95	FG90%
21	(14)	Midwinter	Rainbird	£29.99	FG92%
22	(-)	Cricket Captain	D&H Games	£24.99	Unrated
23	(-)	International Soccer Chall	MicroProse	£24.99	55%
24	(19)	Immortal	Electronic Arts	£24.99	78%
25	(21)	Sirius 7	CRL	£19.95	24%
26	(13)	AMOS	Mandarin	£49.95	N/A
27	(15)	Shadow of the Beast	Psygnosis	£34.95	78%
28	(12)	Battle of Britain	US Gold	£29.99	FG90%
29	(-)	Murder	US Gold	£24.99	81%
30	(-)	Nightbreed Interactive Movie	Ocean	£24.99	56%

This chart is compiled by Gallup Ltd.

TOP SPOT A triumphant *F-19 Stealth Fighter* has crept up on the competition and stolen first place, leaving two previous top spot games, *Kick Off 2* and *Corporation*, in second and third. As for our prediction that *Captive* would come roaring in at the top – well, it only managed to get to number 41 this month, but I'm sure it's going to be right up there soon.

NEW ENTRY *F-19 Stealth Fighter* is obviously the best new entry at number 1, but keep your eye on *Killing Game Show* at 10 and *Indy 500* at 17 – they're bound to move up.



The comeback trail is still open for several games with *Shadow of the Beast* staying in the top 30 and several others getting into the lower reaches of the chart. *Batman the Movie* moves up to 42, *Blood Money* leaps in at 52, *Sim City* reappears at 62 and our game of the year *Rainbow Islands* climbs up to 63. If you looking for some other classics that are still worth getting hold of, then why not check our review of the year on Page 256?

DOWN A number of games take a large tumble this month, including, most surprisingly, *Wings* going from 4 to 18. Both *Shadow of the Beast 1* and *2* take big drops from 15 to 27 and 3 to 12 respectively – perhaps those high price tags having an effect on sales?

? No predictions this month, except that all hell is going to break loose as Christmas approaches. There are so many releases that we're bound to see a big shake-up all through the chart. Oh, all right then... *Captive!* No, really, it's going to do it!

? AMOS stays in the top 30 at 26, but even more amazing is the appearance of the *Fun School 3* educational packages at 43, 50 and 56 places and *KindWords* at 57.

GET IN THE PICTURE



Announcing the arrival of the Amiga Digitising Service which, amazingly enough, is in the business of digitising things for you. They can digitise pictures and artwork up to A4 size in any resolution or from VHS video in 320x256 resolution, 16-shade black and white. The service costs £1.30 for colour digitising, £1.00 for black and white per picture, and 50p per frame digitised from video. The price includes the disk containing the pictures and p&p.

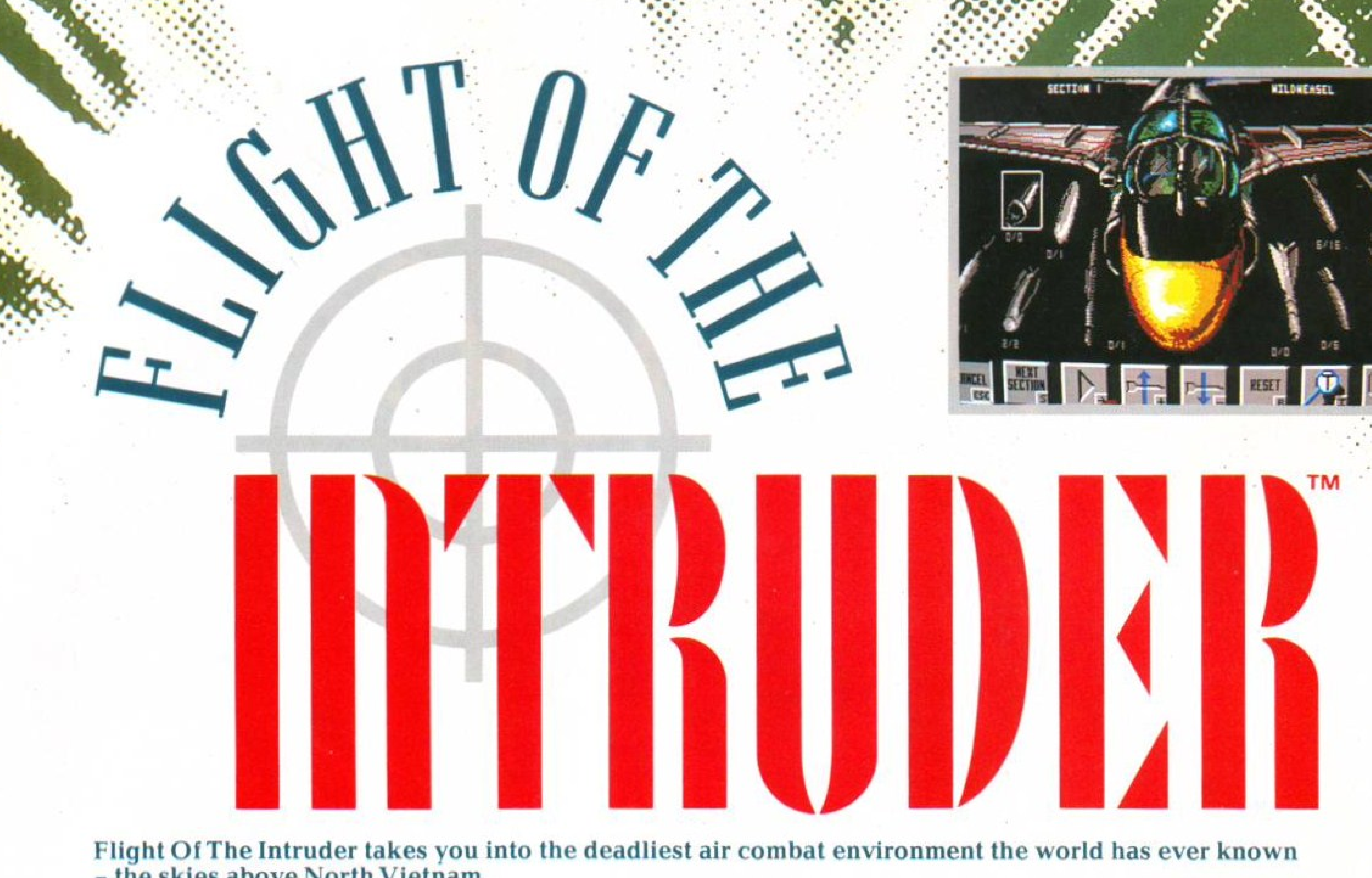
☎ ADS 0903 210279



INDIANA MCKRACKEN

US Gold have released a limited edition dual pack of two cracking good adventure games – *Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. Both games were produced by Lucasfilm and the pack costs £29.99.

☎ US Gold 021 625 3388



Flight Of The Intruder takes you into the deadliest air combat environment the world has ever known – the skies above North Vietnam.

In 1972, the USAF launched Operation Linebacker. US forces and their South Vietnamese allies are locked in a life and death struggle with the fanatical North Vietnamese Army. You must stem the tide of the North Vietnamese offensive by cutting its vital lifeline to its front line troops.

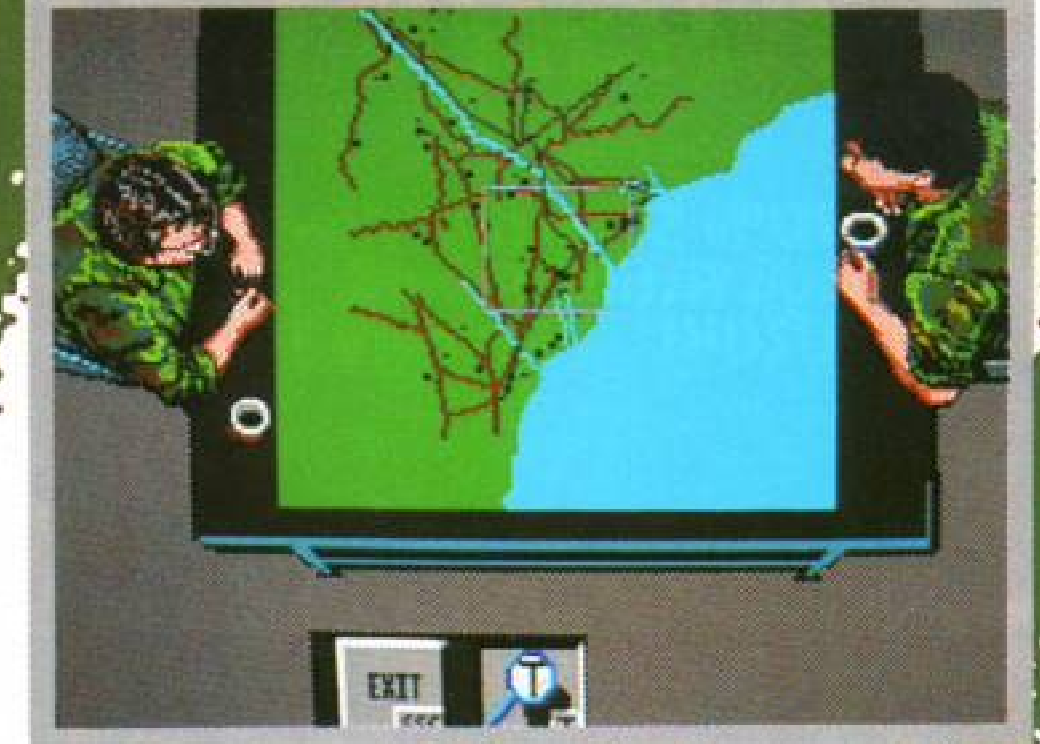
From the US Carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin on "Yankee Station", you must attack a variety of installations defended by surface to air missiles and the MiG fighters of the skillful and determined North Vietnamese Air Force.

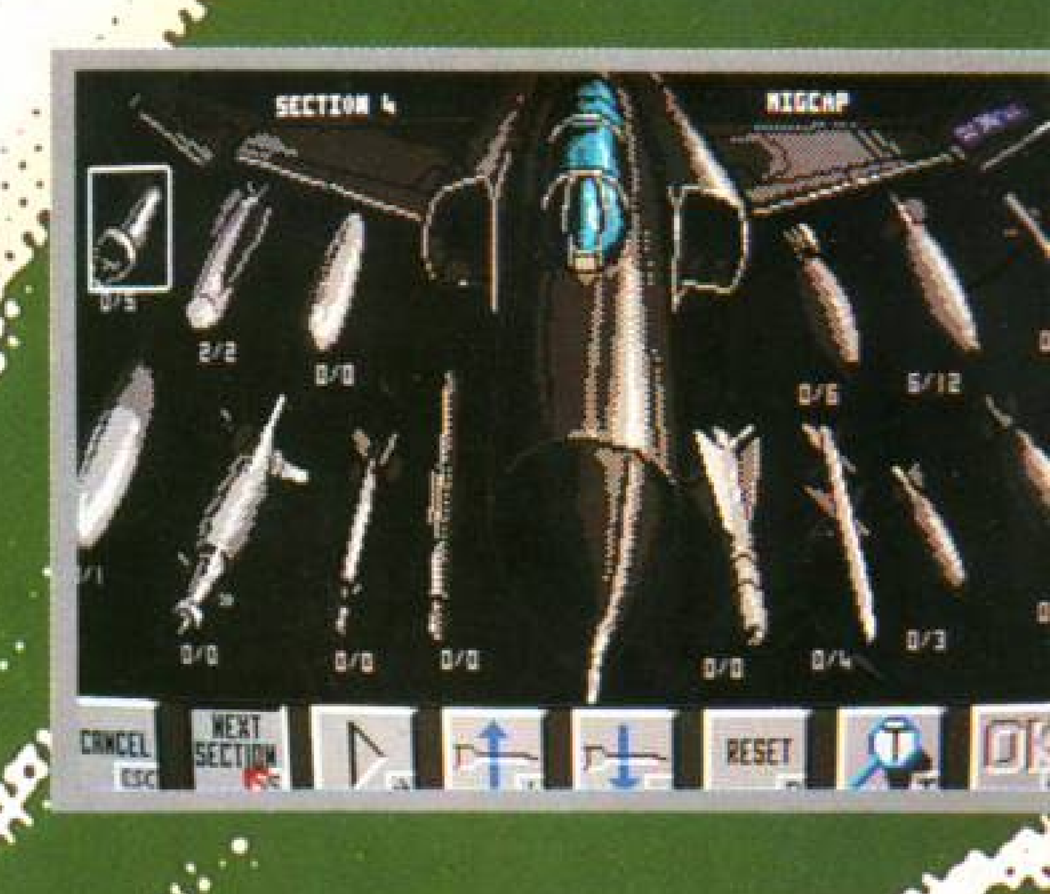
Only team work will get you back alive. The "IRON HAND" flights must destroy or suppress the surface to air missiles whilst Combat Air Patrol aircraft circle high above the strike force looking out for enemy aircraft. Finally, the strike aircraft must find and attack the target braving a hail of small arms and anti-aircraft artillery fire at low level. Individual survival is not the only measure of success, it is the success of the mission as a whole that counts – there is no place for seekers of individual glory.

Enemy aircraft featured are the nimble MiG17 and the more advanced supersonic MiG21, capable of out turning any USAF aircraft.

Flight Of The Intruder takes you into the real world of operational flying and mission planning.









FEATURES

Choose between two of the best aircraft that ever flew. The F-4 Phantom is fast, powerful and equipped with highly advanced avionics. It is so flexible that it can perform any type of mission. The A-6 Intruder has the first all weather computer operated weapons guidance system (DIANE) and an outstanding weapons load, both have stood the test of time and are still in service.

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- 2 different aircraft accurately simulated. 3 different roles: MIGCAP, IRON HAND, or STRIKE.
- Realistic mission environment with enemy artificial intelligence.
- Switch between friendly aircraft in flight.
- Carrier take-off and landing with "MEATBALL" landing aid.
- In-flight radio messages with radio message queueing system.
- View from all aspects and 14 in cockpit views.
- Large numbers of mobile targets including trucks, trains and barges.
- Realistic terrain taken from contemporary operations maps including Hanoi, Haiphong and Than Hoa.
- Instant "Quickstart" option.

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BY THE AUTHORS OF FALCON.

With the Christmas rush over (?) **TRENTON WEBB** seeks out all those games that Santa's grotto elves couldn't quite get finished in time and those they hope to hit us with in the coming year.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

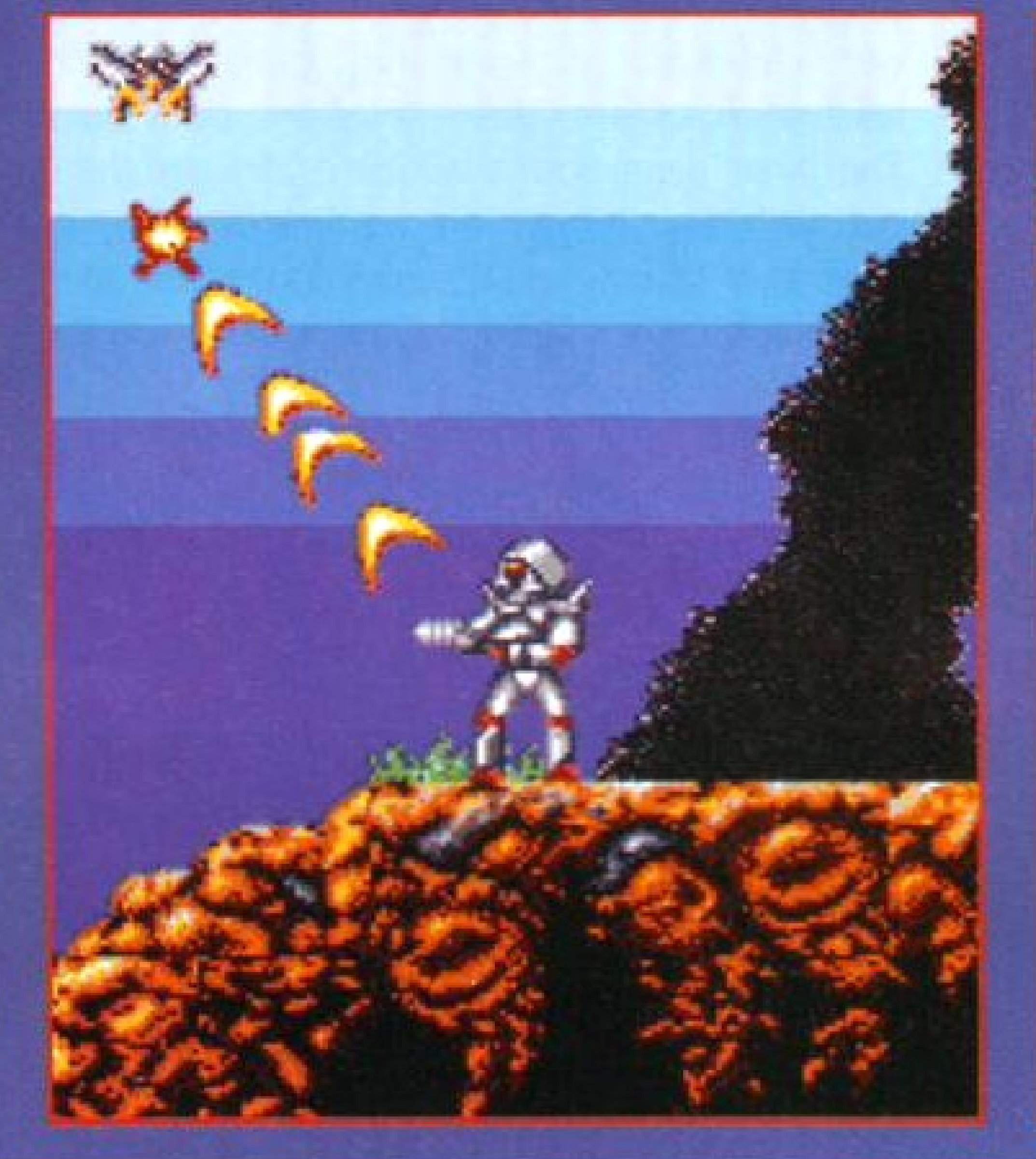
TURRICAN II

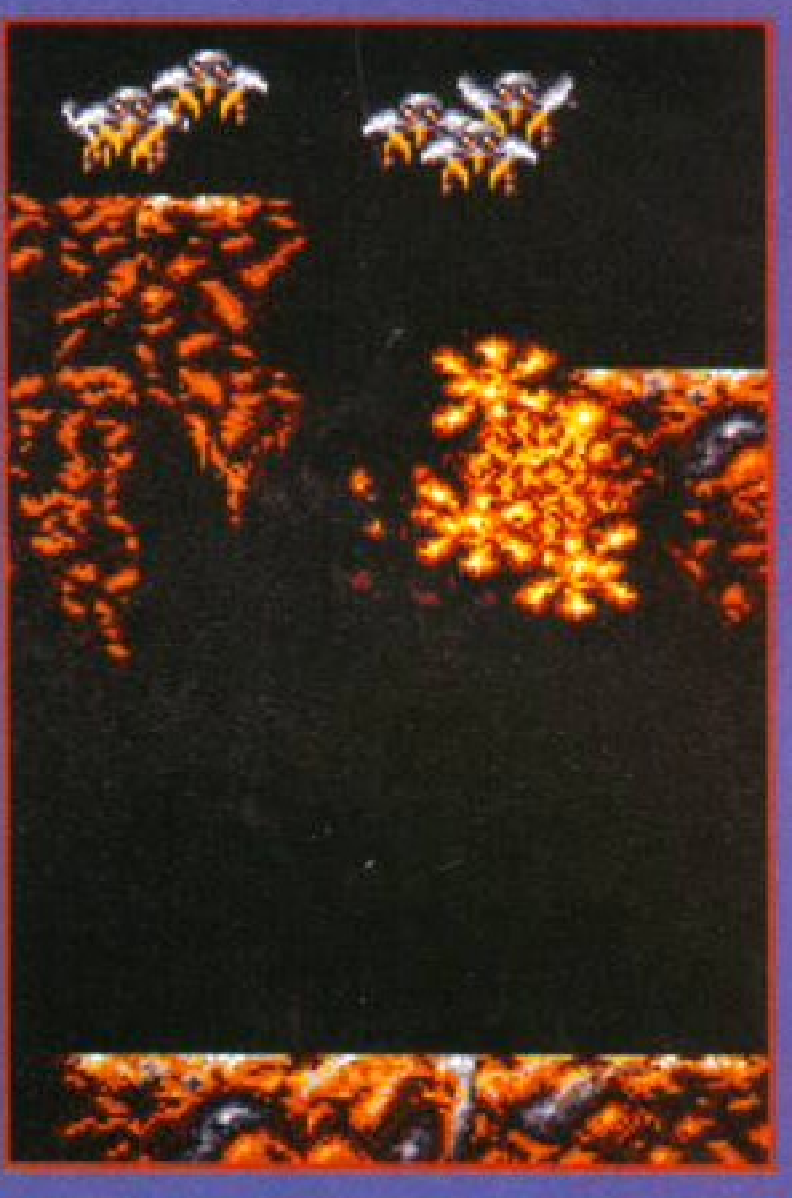
■ ***Rainbow Arts***
ETA December/January

Just when you thought it was safe to get your head down and have a good dream, a new nightmare rears its ugly head. You, as the ultra-hard hero Turrican, must trash the evil MACHINE.

The boy with the laser whip has to trounce another five worlds (12 levels) which run to over 1500 screens of pure, unadulterated carnage. Rainbow Arts hope to cram over 2 Meg of graphics and ultra smooth parallax scrolling into *Turri' II*. The visual effects are backed up by over 20 tunes, 10 speech samples and 50 sound effects.

Lists aside, if the current *Turrican II* demo is anything to go by it should be an action spectacular without equal.





SWIV

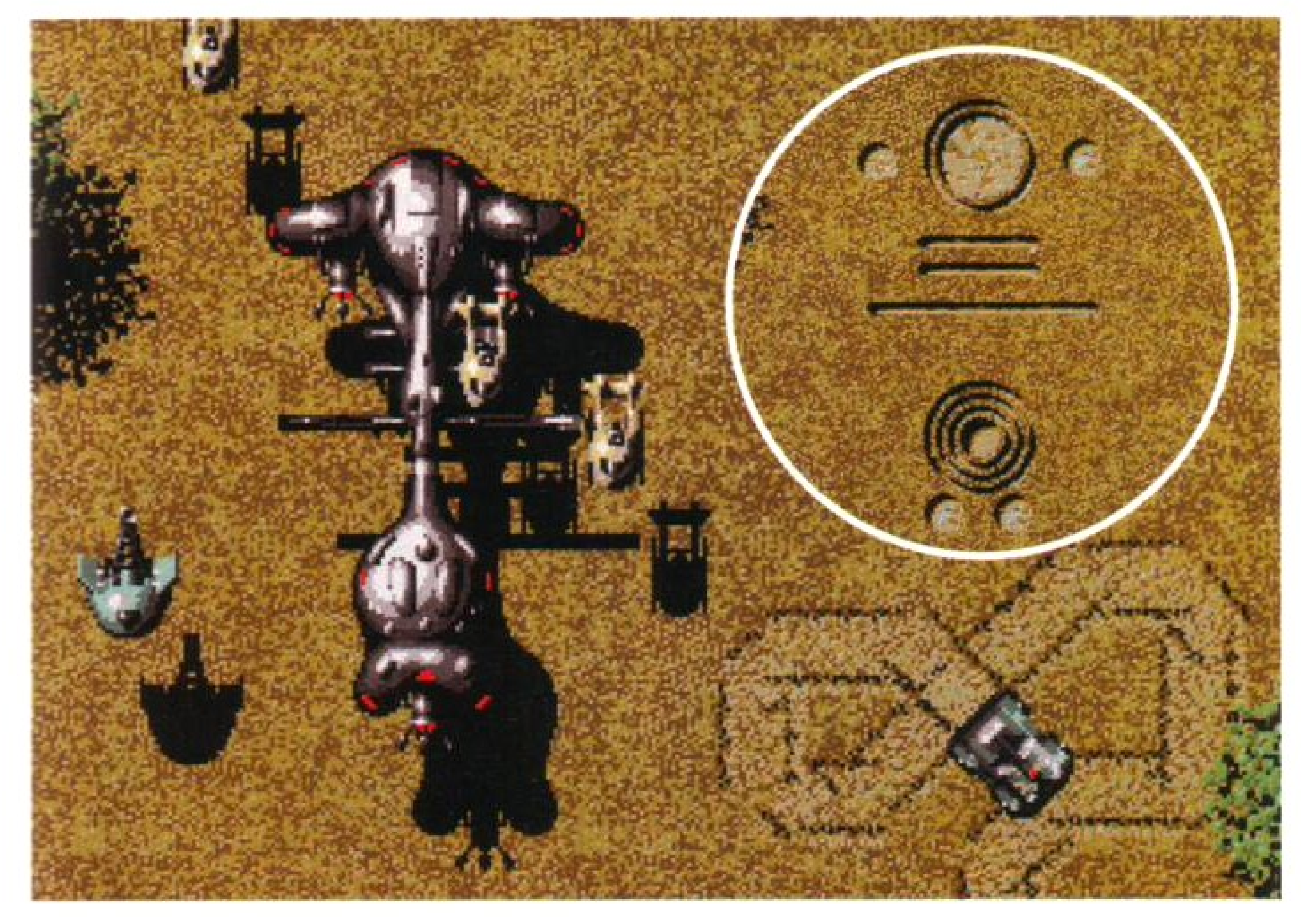
■ ***Storm*** ***ETA December/January***

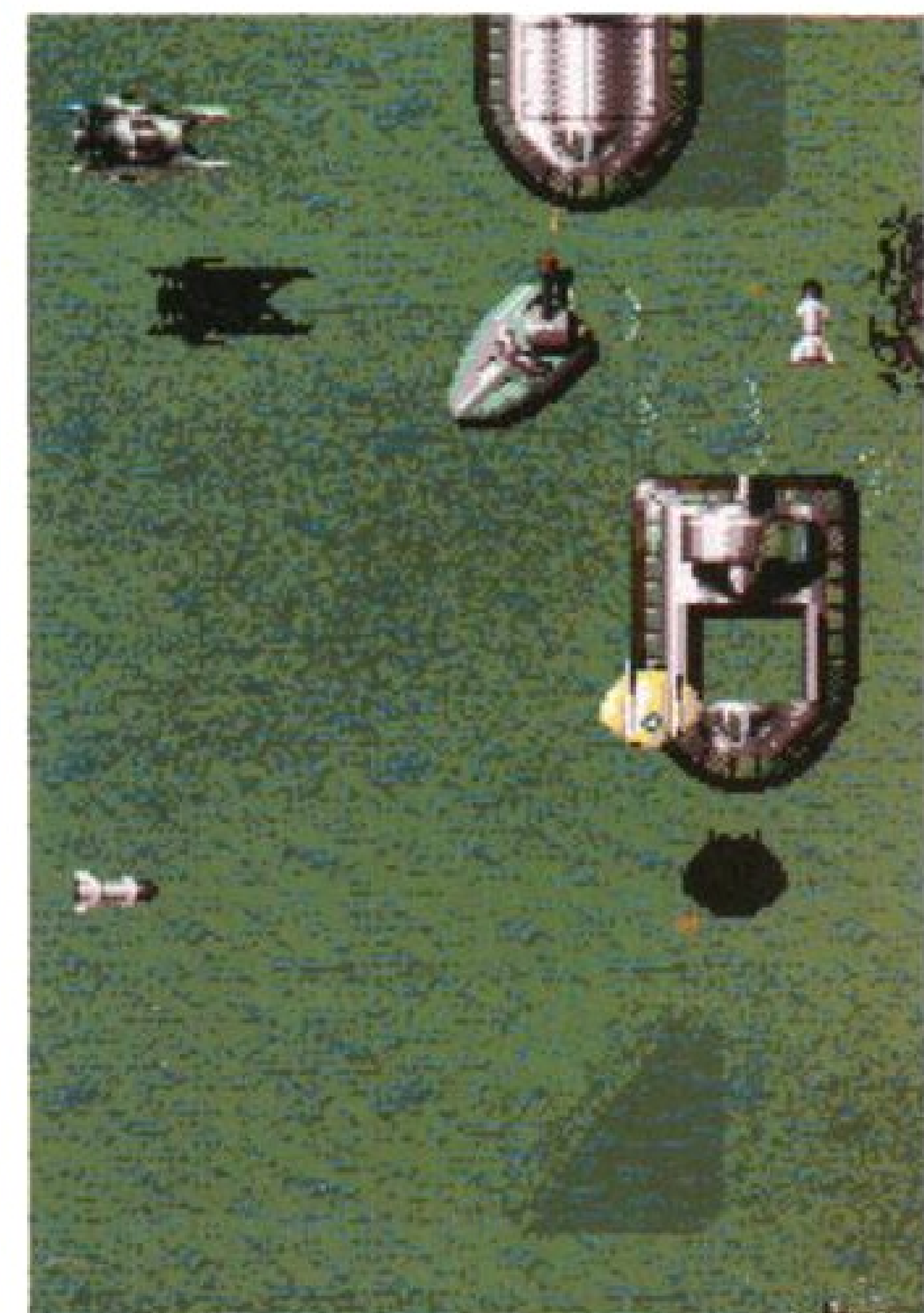
That jeep and heli' are back, mean as ever. The refugees from 'a shoot-em-up that shall remain nameless' are back for one of the spiffiest simultaneous two-player shoot-outs ever seen.

In this valley of death, the jeep travels over the land with a multi-directional gun but has to jump over obstacles, while the chopper hovers above all earthbound objects but can only fire forwards. With heaps of firepower to collect, they fear no evil.

The whole game is, in effect, one continuous level as it uses the Storm continual disk access system to full effect, loading the bad guys and backgrounds before you actually meet them. The whole screen is utilised, so as many enemies as possible can be crammed in to hike up the damage potential. What's more, you can affect the surface you fight over. For example, in the corn fields you leave trails and when a base is blown up the sprite is stamped onto the background, leaving wreckage that blocks the jeep's path.

Those fiendish shoot out specialists Storm – of *St Dragon* fame – have built in a highly flexible ability detector into the game. So if you are a top gun you will face more enemies – firing more shots and flying in less predictable patterns – than will a slower shooter.







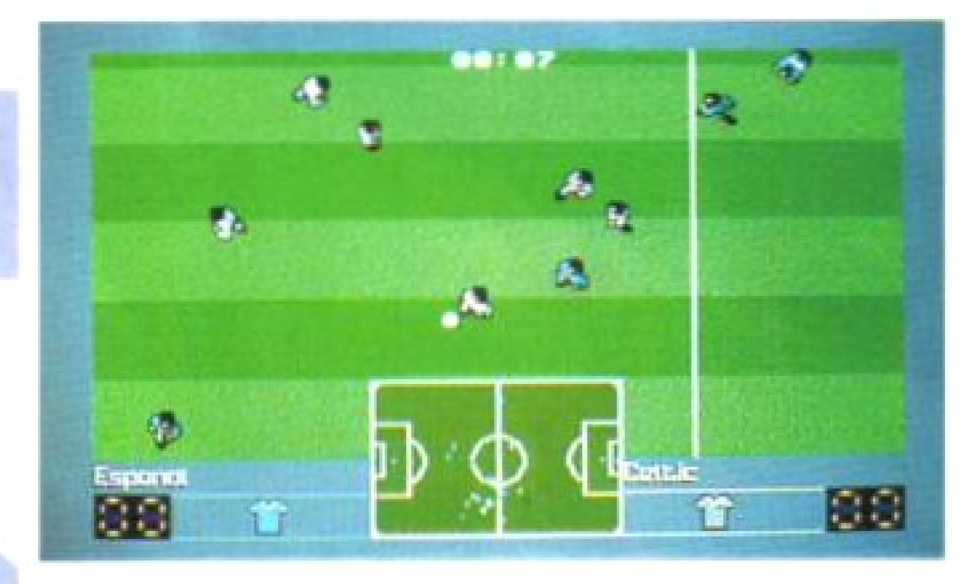
HUNTER

■ *ACTIVISION ETA TBA*

This is different – really wonderfully different. *Hunter* is a game that can be played three ways within the same environment. The games all take place in a 3D world where you see the character walking, driving and cycling about. The Hunter character lives in what can only be described as a graphic adventure world with a totally new dimension added – depth. He can enter houses to look for clues, hot-wire helicopters to take them flying and even swim! The three game forms will be a straight shoot-out with the forces on an enemy army, a number of search and destroy missions or an in-depth adventure. More news will follow on this intriguing game concept.

GAZZA II

■ *Empire ETA December*



Blub, sniffle, sob. Games players unable to hold back the tears at the news of Gazza's second computer coming need wait little longer. The new game featuring football's most marketable asset is to be a greater technical advancement than the first rather flawed affair.

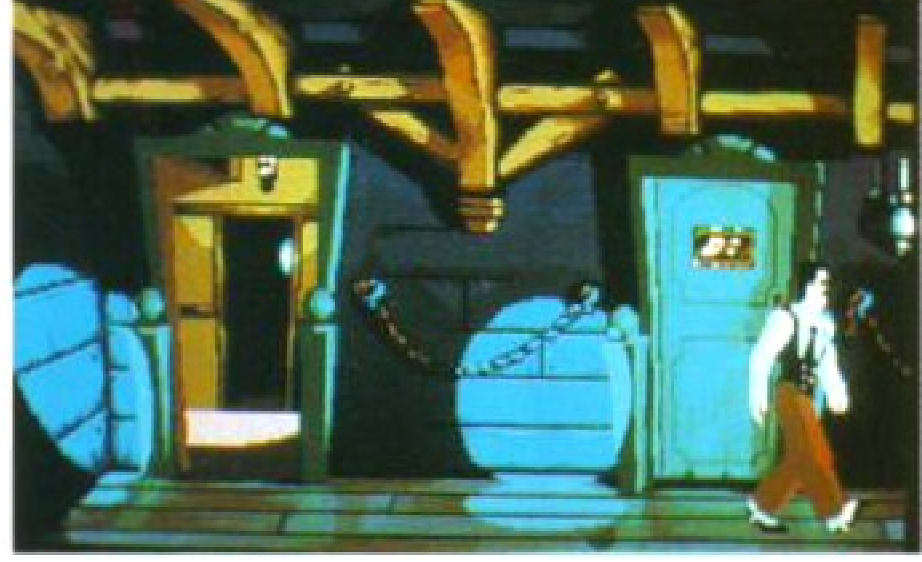


Gazza II has been programmed by Chris Pink (of *Midwinter* fame) and features music by David (*Total Recall*) Whittaker. The game itself takes place on a bitmapped pitch with each player under orders via an expert tactical coaching option. Instructions given here actually affect the players' behaviour on the pitch and even at set pieces, making this, Empire claim, the most complete soccer package ever seen. Practising those set pieces pays off, Brian.

To add a strategy element there is also a management section, which pits the best 64 teams in Europe against each other in four different leagues. Can Gazzamania outlive Turtlehype? Watch those review pages next month for the full story!

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE

■ *US Gold/Delphine*
ETA early 1991



The follow-up to *Operation Stealth* is nearing completion. Again it is a graphic adventure, using the Cinematique system to tell a tale of mystery and murder in an Agatha Christie style.

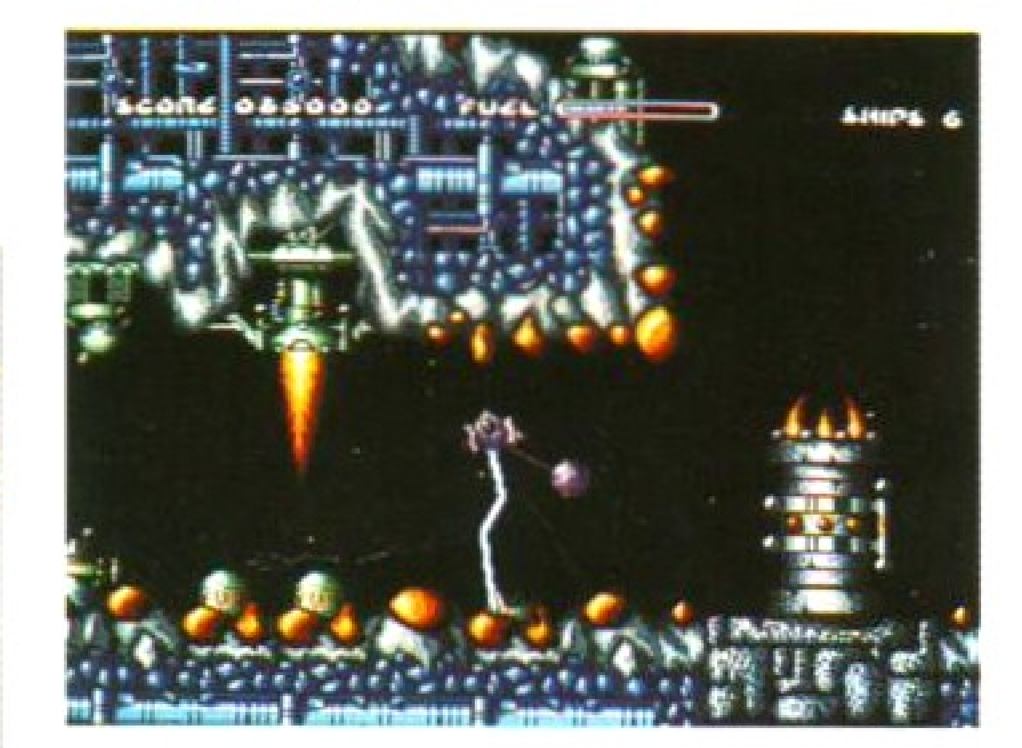
The tale centres upon a yacht and its owner, Niklos Karaboudjan, who gets topped shortly after inviting a few friends over for a quick cruise. You play a famous detective who happens to be on board (aren't they always?) with the task of tracking down the villain – a task which is made made no easier by the mysterious disappearance of the body.



The improvements to the Cinematique system – first seen in *Future Wars* – continue, exceeding even *Op Stealth's* lofty standards. The Amiga version will feature graphics in a full 32 colours and characters that have been doubled in size. In addition to the 'point-and-click' menus used in Cinematique, characters will also be able to overhear conversations and question suspects in more depth.

ZARATHRUSTA

■ *HEWSON*
ETA Spring 1991



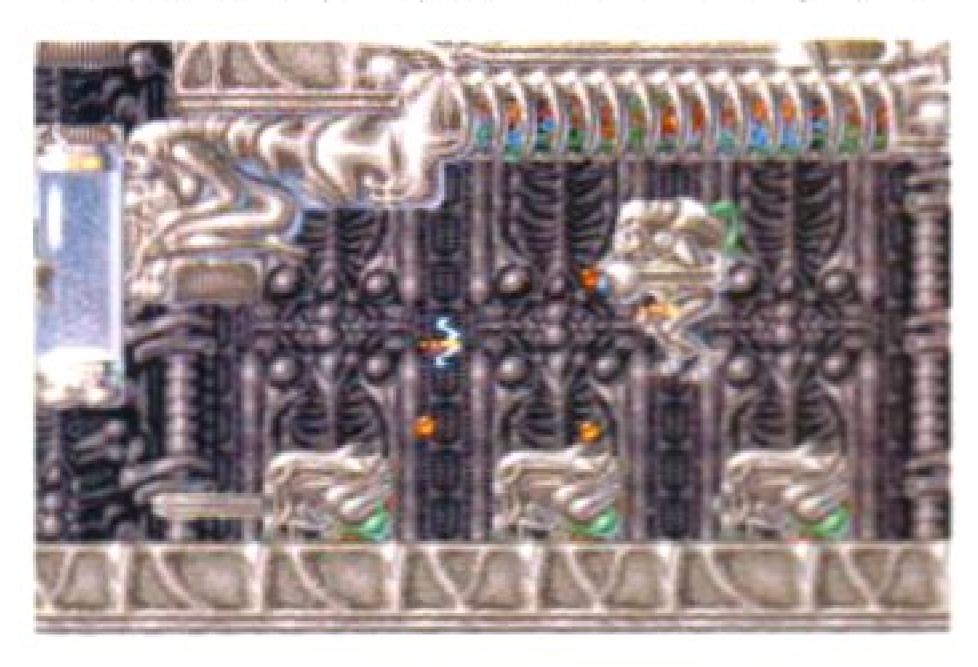
Thrust was one of those early computer games that looked awful and yet managed to capture an almost perfect gameplan. As a pilot you had to fly into a maze of tunnels, using only a thrust and rotate control. You then had to pick up a ball by tractor beam, which swung like a pendulum, and fly back out. It was an excellent test of close craft control.

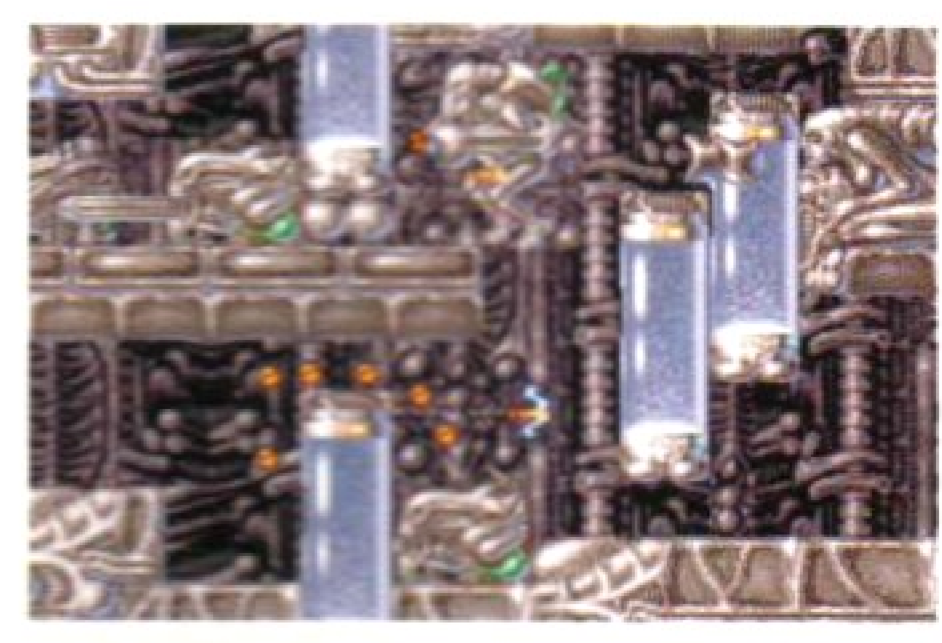
Now Hewson are working on an updated version entitled *Zarathrusta*, with Amiga standard graphics and even more surprises. Doors, save game stations and anit-grav rooms are just a few of the joys that should re-establish this almost forgotten style as a 90s classic.

Z-OUT

■ *RAINBOW ARTS ETA January*

Remember *X-Out*? No, it wasn't pronounced 'Cross Out'. Well the horizontally-scrolling underwater shoot-em-up has spawned a little brother. In a shoot-em-up sequel, the build-and-buy space fleet have sent their Z-Out fighters to attack Alpha Centauri in a pre-emptive strike. Guess what? You take one of theses mix-and-match craft into a six-level battle for the survival of mankind. Little is known about the project, but if it is anything like its forerunner then it's going to be fast, loud and explosive.







MIG 29-FULRUM

■ Domark ETA January1991

Domark is all set to launch its first flight sim ever this year and it looks likely to be a mould-breaking game. The subject of the simulation is the all-new, all-singing, all-bombing MiG 29 'Fulcrum'. This plane stunned the aviation establishment after it went on the display circuit by doing things that looked impossible. Quite simply, the Soviets weren't supposed to have an aircraft this good.

The game will let simulation pilots take the flight seat as they are trained up in the art of low-level flight, mid-air refuelling, interception runs, tracking and evasive tactics. The real missions which follow will take fliers from the Baltic to the Persian Gulf and even over the Soviet-Chinese border. The emphasis of the sim makes it one of the first to reflect the thaw in East-West relations. Pilots are instructed to photograph enemy subs rather than blow them out of the sea. Even the air-to-ground strikes are tactical, with the emphasis on avoiding detection as much as firepower.

Among the features crammed into the game will be out-of-cockpit views from any angle, missile's-eye views, multiple-location scenarios, sampled sound and a beautifully usable mouse control system.

To add to the realism the incoming enemies will also attack from any height, not just in the same 'plane' – a flaw common to most flight sims in the past – so bogies can really be "12 O'clock high". *Amiga Format* has seen a rough running version and it's very convincing. The update is smooth and the flight characteristics are disconcertingly real.

The Russian authorities were so chuffed that their wonderplane had been selected for a home computer simulation in the West that TASS (the Soviet News Agency) has been supplying all the technical details to Simis, the team who are coding the project for Domark. Mind you, it could just be a case of mistaken identity – Domark's development house is known as the Kremlin!





The MiG 29 heads for two of its targets. These strikes will be tactical and so getting away without being brought down is just as important as a hit on the target.

So what do Simis know about flying?



The Simis coding team responsible for *MiG 29* (left to right) Ian Baverstock, Chris Tubbs Jonathan Newth and David Payne.

Simis is perhaps one of the few coding teams in the country that has the qualifications and the actual aviation experience to construct flight sims from scratch.

David Payne has a BSc in physics and has worked on the development of simulation software used to test Harriers.

Ian Baverstock has a degree in aeronautical engineering and has done extensive work relating to air combat pilot computer assistance.

Jonathan Newth is another graduate, this time in Physics and Computer Science, and he, along with other members of the team, worked within British Aerospace on real-time virtual graphics.

Christopher Tubbs specialises in electronics and communications and was involved in armaments systems development, once again for BAe.



The MiG may have a limited HUD, but the missile system more than makes up for that when the dogfights start.

The Fulcrum – the best fighter plane ever?

A truly formidable aircraft, the MiG 29 can stand comparison with the best that the West can offer. Unlike its US counterparts the plane isn't fly-by-wire and so all its tricks can be produced by pilots with no computer calculation or assistance. Its performance and price look so sharp, that the German Luftwaffe may well buy Russian and not the US F-16s in the future.

The MiG 29 is as manoeuvrable as an F-16 and, thanks to innovative air intakes, it can fly much faster, topping out at MACH 2.3. Most impressive is its rate of climb, which is an astonishing 19,000 metres per minute – that's roughly a mile in six seconds. It carries AA-10 Alamo missiles, which gives the plane better BVR (beyond visual range) capabilities than western planes.

Using a helmet-mounted sighting system, the Fulcrum pilot doesn't have to line up the nose of his plane to gain a locked target. Most impressively, though, an integrated fire control system allows pilots to track, lock and launch at a target without using radar.

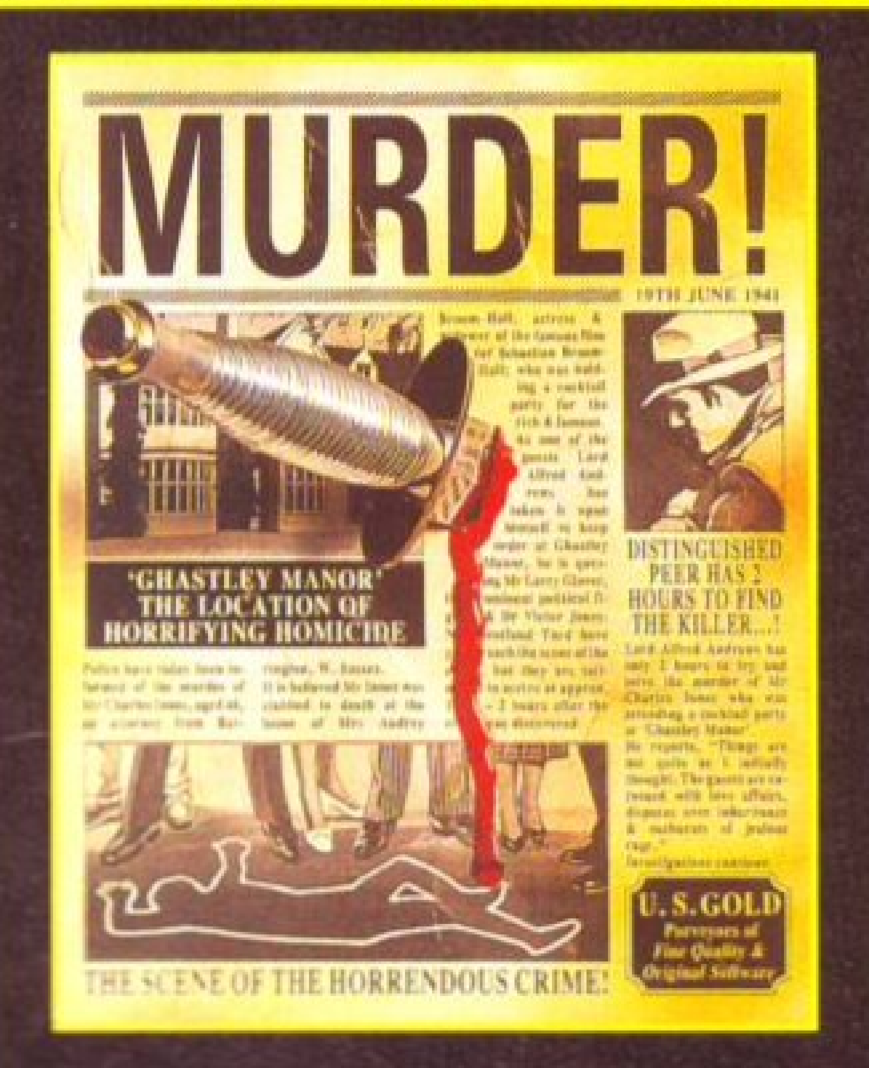
Put simply, the new MiG should make an excellent game. It is a fast and flexible aircraft with a weapons system that has a real punch.

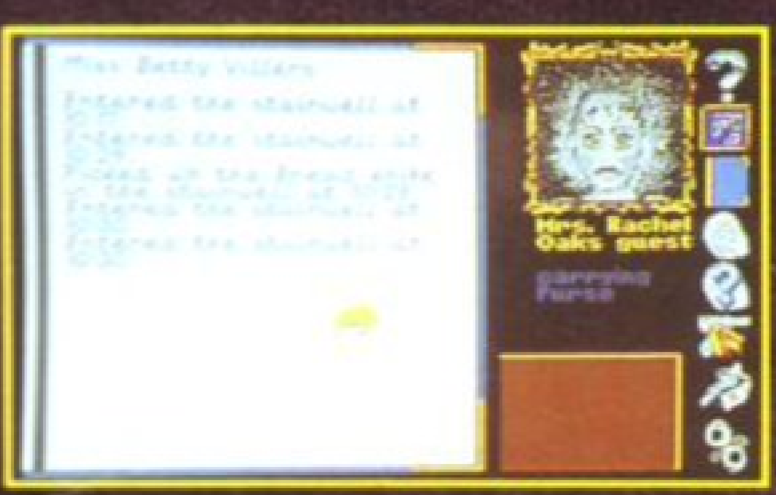


Take-off. The MiG 29 is ready to roll. In the centre of the lower half of the instrument panel is the mouse control guide (the green cross). When the two lines are centred the plane is level. The vertical line indicates roll and the horizontal represents pitch.

GOLD IN

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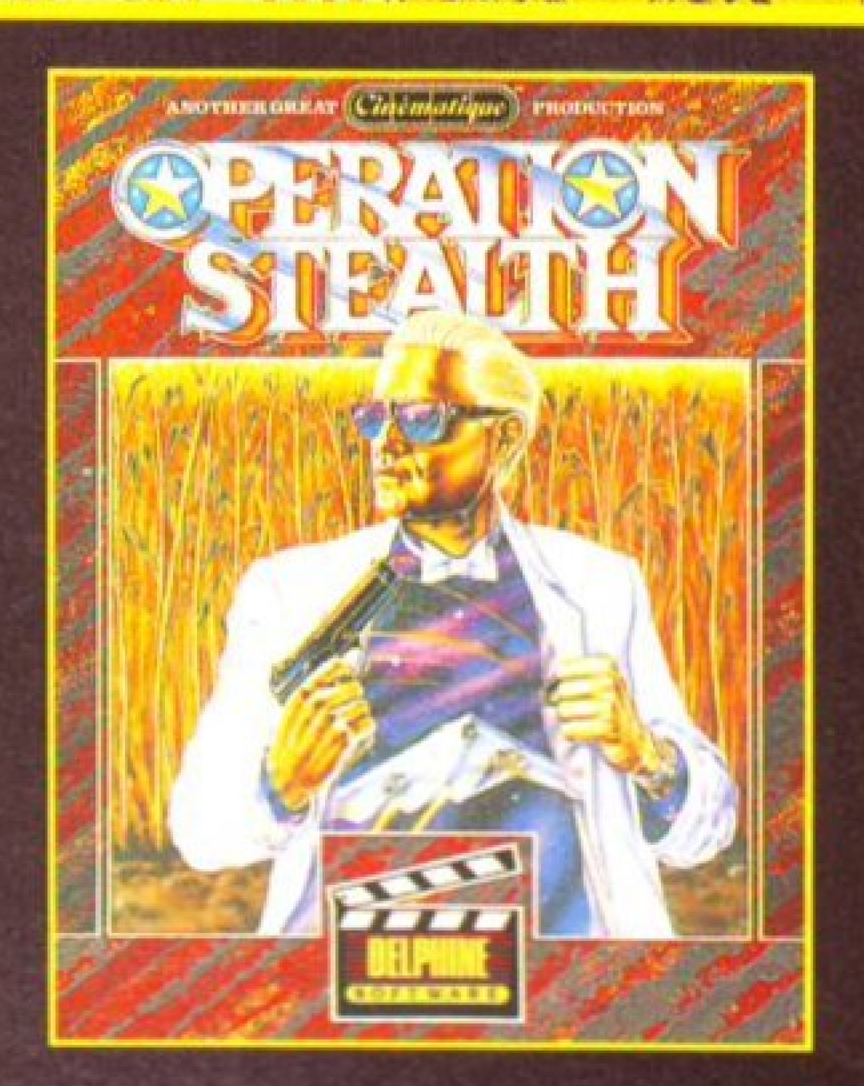




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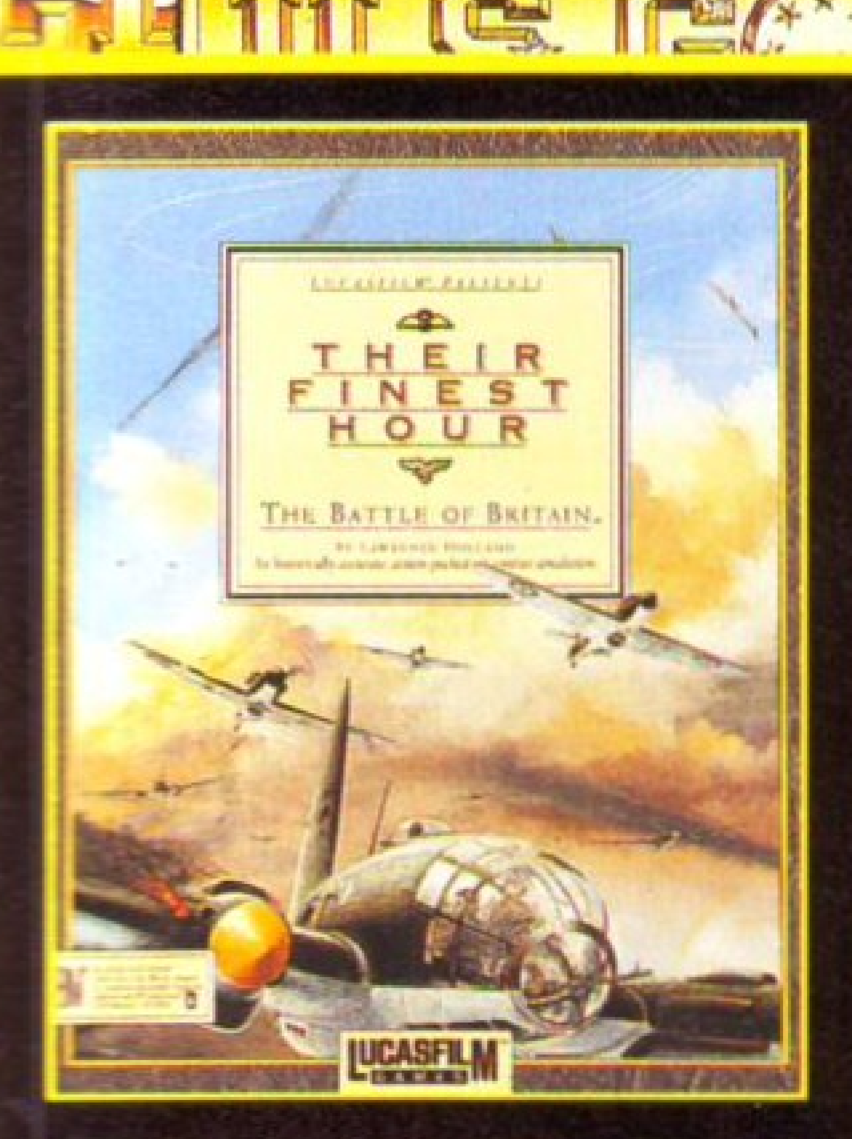
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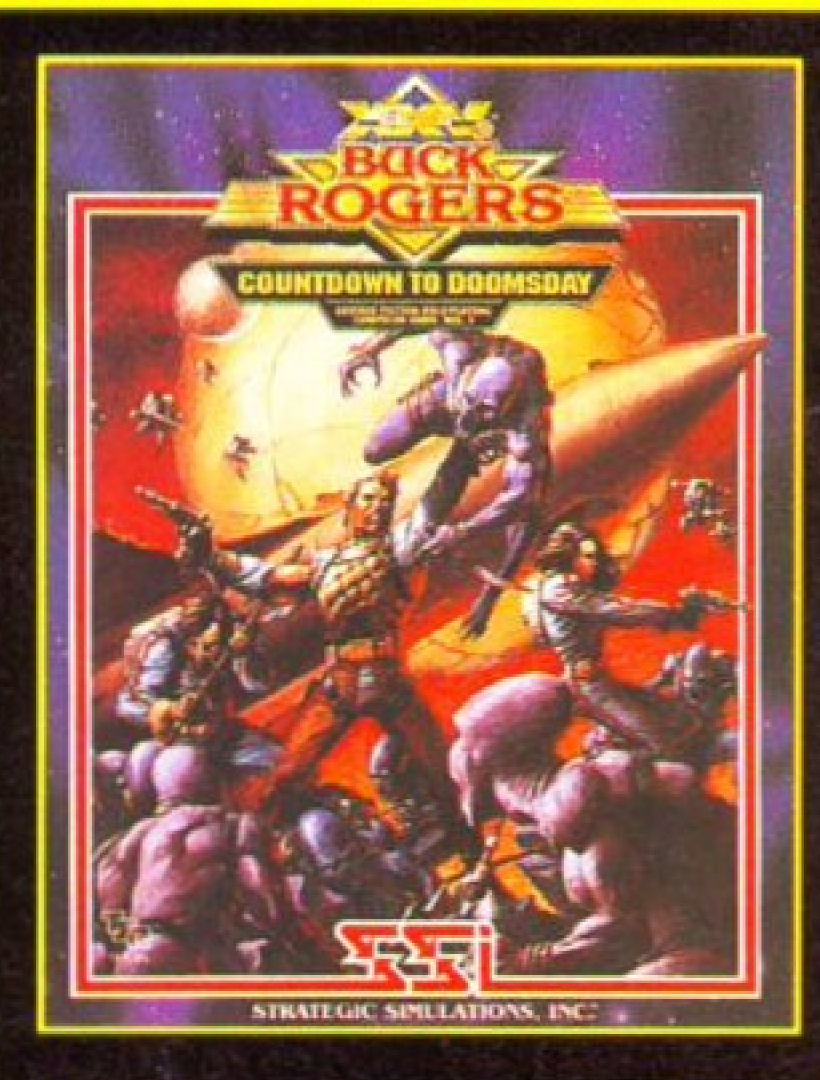




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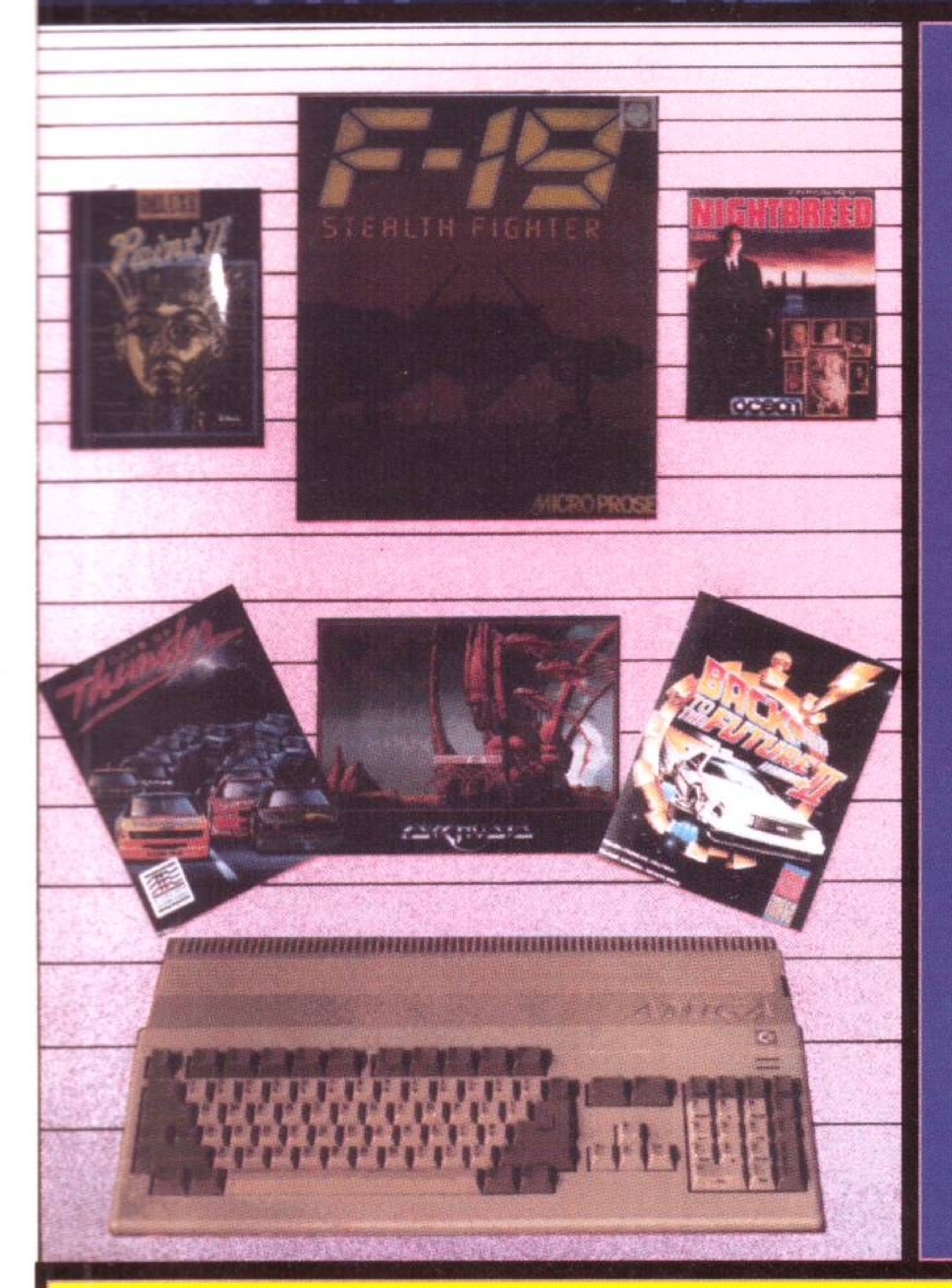
Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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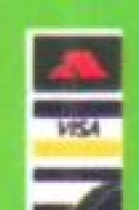
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George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four

Visions of the Future

Cars that fly, interstellar travel, gleaming spires in a green and pleasant land – or a life of industrial slavery in post-holocaust decay? From the sublime to the grim, visions of the future have dominated the 20th Century. **GORDON HOUGHTON** assesses their impact on computer games.

The future: will it be full of Jeremy Beadle's spawn, or will it be rosy? Will we all be watching Brucie's *Generation Game* or will we fry in a nuclear fireball? Nobody knows, but everybody likes to make a guess. For some it's just idle speculation, but for others it's a way of earning cash.

Games programmers are just like everyone else: they enjoy predicting the future. Their games are full of suggestions about what life will be like in ten, or a hundred, or a million years' time. But why do they bother?

Well, if you set your game in Siberia or Saigon, you've got to verify the facts. If you set it in the future, you can invent what you like because no one can gainsay your predictions. An infinite universe is full of infinite possibilities – and so, no matter how impossible it is now, in science fiction a robot can have a brain the size of a planet, fish can fly spaceships and ET really can phone home.

Little Green Men

Despite an infinite variety of possiblities, most futuristic game visions churn out the same old stuff: generally, variations on the theme of aliens on a universal military conquest trip being stopped in their slimy tracks by the human race. It's easy to see why this subject recurs: alien attack is the least offensive excuse for a shoot-em-up.

But there is also another reason: science fiction always has one eye on contemporary issues, and future visions inevitably reflect present day influences. Shoot-em-ups echo our current fear of invasion, and games like *Speedball 2* borrow ideas from contemporary sports such as American Football.

Very often ideas for a sci-fi future appear in games from the wealth of influences around in other media. Sometimes the connection is a direct one, in straight conversions such as *Neuromancer*, *The Punisher* and *Robocop*. Elsewhere the derivation of ideas from sci-fi books, films and TV serials is more selective.

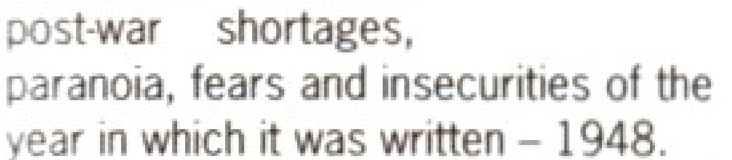
Star Trek, for example, has bequeathed more than a few basic ideas to games designers – among them a cargo of multiplying Tribbles (*Elite*), tractor beams (*Starglider 2*

Continued overleaf ▸

and this month's complete game, *Interphase*) and Horta rock monsters (*Dungeon Master*). And what futuristic game would be complete without the furniture of established sci-fi conventions: suspended animation, robots, androids, matter transporters, hyperspace and space stations?

Past Predictions

Today's paranoia makes tomorrow's science fiction. One of the most influential future flicks – Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, made way back in 1926 – is an expression of early 20th-Century fears about the industrial age: instead of man working the machines, the machines work man. Enslaved to the needs of the metal monsters, the world has become one huge factory, its population doomed to drab, hopeless lives on the treadmill of society. In a similar way, George Orwell's chilling book *Nineteen Eighty-Four* reflected post-war shortages, paranoia, fears and insecurities of the year in which it was written – 1948.


Amid the Nineties fear of hideous pollution, games like *Sim Earth* clean up the future.

But these are the Nineties and now huge, clanking, *Metropolis*-style machines are out of date. Nowadays, small is beautiful and technology is tops: Nineties angst is all about violence, drug use, clever computers and pollution, so games about potential or predicted futures reflect this - look at *Neuromancer, Elite, SimCity* or *Robocop*. These subscribe to one of the most dominant visions of the future in games: it will be the same, but with knobs on.

Big Future

Space games like *Star Flight*, *Starglider 2* and Damocles have their heart firmly in the present and their head full of natty gadgets, big guns and sexy ships. Instead of a multicultural world we'll have a multicultural galaxy: visiting its inhabitants will be a bit like eating at exotic restaurants.

The fun is in getting to grips with the customs of the place. Belching after a meal is considered polite in Denmark; folding your napkin in the next galaxy could be a request for immediate castration.

The staples of intergalactic society in games are the staples of society on Earth: there are dictatorships, volatile alliances, bounty hunters, wars and pirates. Aliens are simply foreign business partners: instead of Italians in silk suits, there are scientifically advanced bipedal plants with engineering skills.

And in many ways the cultural gap is smaller. Italians speak Italian; aliens tend to be fluent in Standard Galactic. One notable exception is *Captain Blood*, which bravely attempts a complex linguistic interface to simulate language problems.

A Sporting Chance

What applies to space games also applies to future sports: the violence is exaggerated, the players are tougher and the games take advantage of 'new' technology. Sport is increasingly riddled with cheating, drug-taking and professional fouls – in *Speedball 2*, these practices have been legalised. American Footballers indulge in heavy challenges, so in *Speedball 2* killing players is a legitimate way to score points.

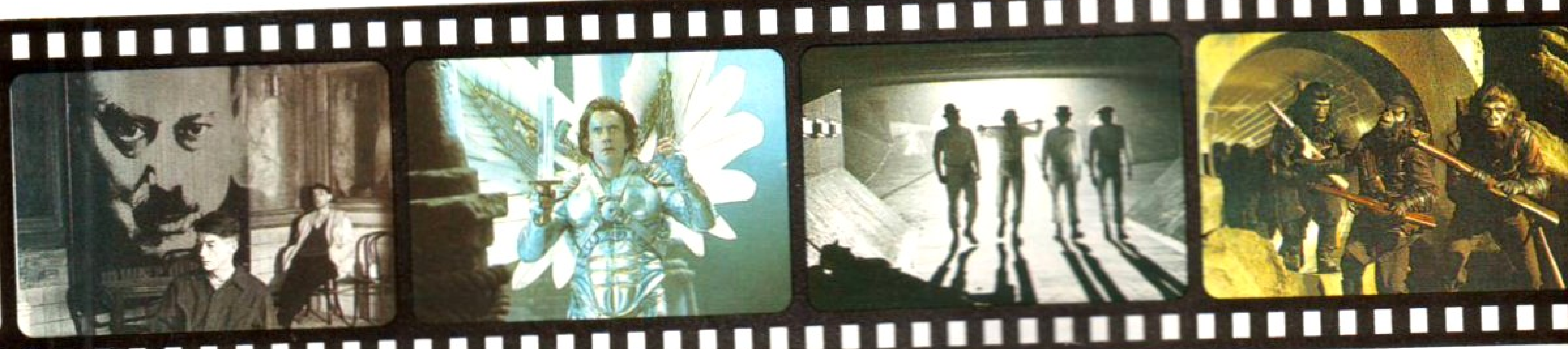
Today sport is for the couch potato, tomorrow the couch potato rules TV: *Thunderstrike* envisages a future in which the ratings decide who wins. *The Running Man – Run The Gauntlet* with criminals – is broadcast to millions of spectators up and down the country on huge 50-ft-wide colour screens. The contestants, enemies of the state, must play till they drop.

Big Rocks and Future Shocks

Prophets haven't always been quite so cynical. A century ago, the industrial revolution changed the face of the western world, promising automation, health, wealth and comfort. People would sit sipping lemonade on English lawns and enjoy a life of leisure and pleasure.

Continued on Page 30





We Have the Technology

Science fiction invents another new machine when it needs one. What basis do some sci-fi clichés actually have in fact?

ANDROIDS

In games like *R-Type, Denaris, Short Circuit, Paradroid 90* and *First Contact,* robots are highly sophisticated creatures; they're also standard science fiction characters. The current truth is more disappointing: we have robots capable of manning factories, playing the piano, picking up snooker balls, and differentiating basic objects visually, but so far nobody's come up with a robot that can keep up with ordinary human speech, walk happily on two legs or perform any more than the most basic feats of human reasoning. For more on robots fact and fiction, see p131.

PEP PILLS

Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* envisaged a society of programmed individuals pacified by pleasure drugs. Pep pills or amphetamines were widely issued to soldiers during World War II to combat the effects of stress and fatigue. Since then it's been discovered that the brain is one of the major hormone producing organs of the body. Some theorists suggest that with the correct techniques individuals may be able to regulate their body's own drug supply from within. The game equivalents are shoot-em-up heroes like *Turrican* collecting power-ups and energy pods for extra energy.



THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

Games traditionally regard drugs as the pleasure stimulants of the future, but films like Woody Allen's *Sleeper* and *Barbarella* predict actual machines which provide titillation on tap. No one has yet invented a real Orgasmatron, but in the lab pleasure stimulators have had the equivalent effect in the brains of rats.

FUTURE FLICKS

The cinematic future is a chilling place: *Brazil, THX 1138* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are Orwellian in their gloom. It's rare for man to have learnt much from his history: among others *A Clockwork Orange, Blade Runner* and *Death Race 2000* suggest rampant crime and destruction. Elsewhere technology has clearly turned out to be a Very Bad Thing: in *Westworld* and *Futureworld,* androids built as designer toys turn nasty and attack the pleasure seekers.

The crippled post-nuclear war environment is a typical theme. Australia is the last bastion of civilisation in the film of Nevil Shute's *On The Beach. Planet Of The Apes* gives the post-war survival an ironic twist: apes take control of the Earth where man has failed. Natural disasters are dealt with in *Quintet* (a new ice age) and *When Worlds Collide* (a wayward star).

However, the future can be a silly place: *Star Trek* predicts an eclectic universe in which almost every problem can be solved by an honest captain, a supply of dilithium crystals and a hassled engineer.



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Things didn't go to plan. When Orwell wrote *Nineteen Eighty-Four* he wasn't the only pundit predicting doom and gloom. Since those heady days when industrialisation seemed the answer to everything, utopia as a realisable dream hasn't been popular, and this is echoed by games designers; yes, society is headed for disintegration.

Sometimes the reason is nature: collision with a meteorite (*Midwinter*) or some object totally out of control (*Millennium 2.2*) brings about the equivalent of a life-choking nuclear winter and causes the social order to regress. More usually, the future is a tough one because of man's continuing inhumanity to man: in *Killing Cloud* the mafia are responsible for choking life under a poisonous gas cloud; in *Resolution 101*, a government shocked by escalating crime rates frees convicted murderers, so that they can eliminate fellow-criminals in exchange for cash and liberty.

In *Warhead*, *First Contact*, *Infestation* and most shoot-em-ups, trouble comes from outer space. In *Infestation* and *Xenomorph* it's a plague of Alien-like locusts killing off colonists one by one. In *Warhead* the aliens externalise present fears: it's not reds under the bed but bugs from another galaxy, a mass intelligence consisting of millions of insectoid organisms who've pooled their negligible individualism and self-interest into a communistic threat.

The Jolly Green Future

Inevitably, because of contemporary attitudes to the environment, some people are now producing eco-conscious visions of the future. In *Duster*, over-enthusiastic use of chemicals has led to mutation: crops aren't plagued by mere locusts, but by giant insects capable of pupating in a matter of hours and immune to DDT. The moral: mess around with the environment and you'll pay in Kill-Ant.

These are visions so miserable they're enough to give you a headache. Luckily, some games are standing by with a cup of tea and an aspirin. There aren't any *really* optimistic future visions – love, peace and harmony don't make exciting gameplay – but some games are less pessimistic than others. Recent developments in game design allow you to construct your own future.

Sim City, its sequel *Sim Earth* and *Pandora's Debut* give you the chance to build a better future by stabilising a city or an eco-system. Eco-games give you the choice: opt for maximum urbanisation, planetary pollution and a diet of chips and you get what you deserve. Eat muesli, ban CFCs, stop wars, halt pollution and you're in with a chance.

Who Will be Right?

In the past, plenty of predictions have missed the mark. There's no chance of our being capable of a space odyssey by 2001, the holocaust hasn't come (yet) and we've still to find any intelligent alien life.

On the other hand, long before Gagarin there were auguries that man would make it into space and test-tube babies, genetic engineering and amphetamines are all successful science fiction predictions. Even Orwell's all-seeing Big Brother wasn't total fiction: it's just the technology that's different, with national databases now stuffed with private details. And if Orwell was right, game predictions could be, too.

The question is, which will it be: nuclear winter, eco-harmony or *RoboCop*? Will we have aggressive Speedball-type sports? Will Blue Peter remember to dig up their Box For The Year 2000? Wait and see... ■

ANDREW BRAYBROOK
GRAFTGOLD

Thinks the future could be grim. "I can see consoles barging in. But with all that competition, the standard of Amiga games is bound to improve. Port-overs will begin to die out, and there should be a general technical improvement, with games running at arcade speeds of 50 frames a second" – something Graftgold have just learnt to master with a little help from Rainbow Arts.

Braybrook also thinks that games will be more involved, *Populous*-style, pushing gameplay to its limits, "though there may be a price to pay in terms of graphics."

He envisages more 1Mb games, more ambitious arcade conversions and a lot more 3D products "with very speedy polygon routines." CD technology, on the other hand, "will take off briefly and then burn itself out." And ultimately? "I'd like to see a supercomputer Amiga variant with extra sprites and bit-plane stuff."

Andy Braybrook, famed for this year's *Amiga Format* Top Game of the Year, *Rainbow Islands*, believes CD technology will burn out and die quite rapidly.

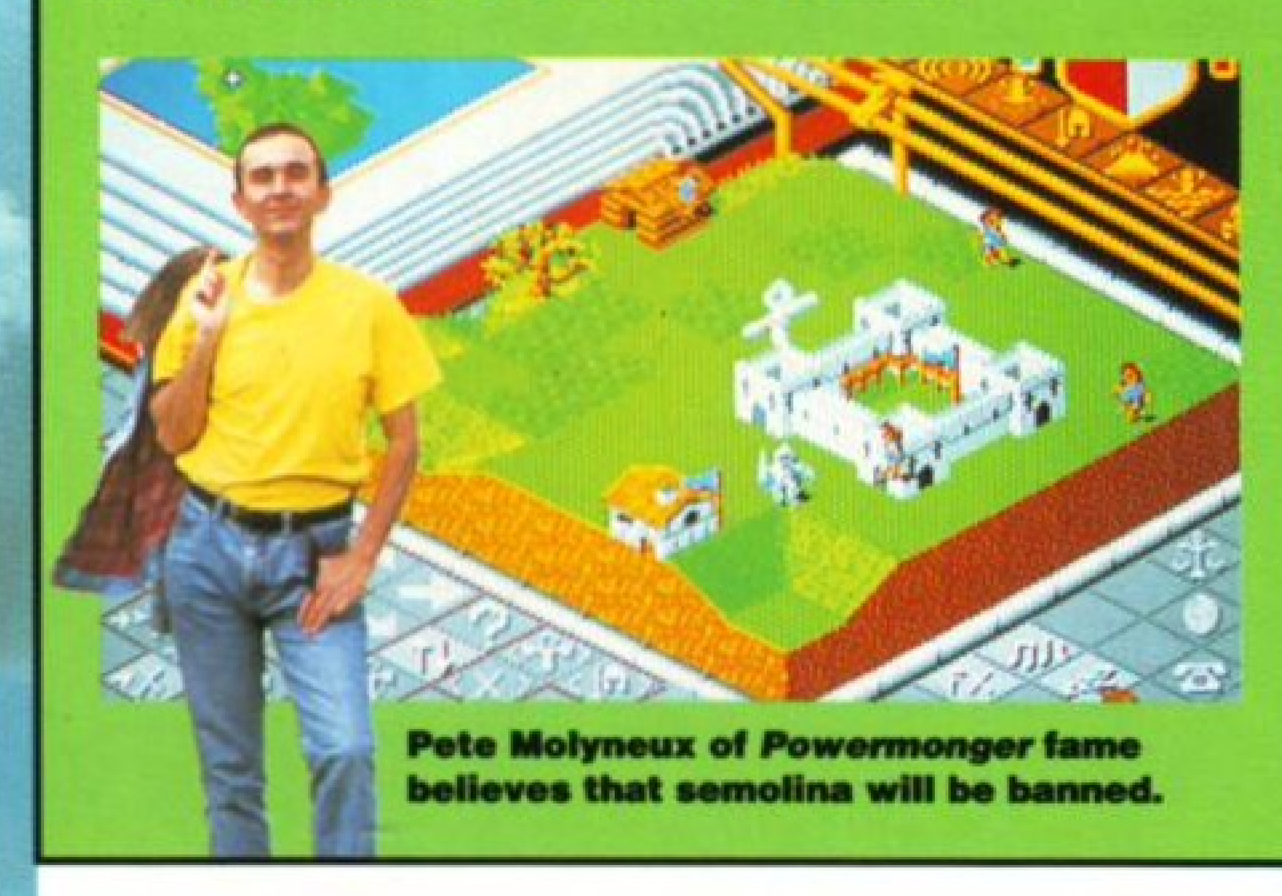
PETER MOLYNEUX
BULLFROG

The man who says *Powermonger* is even better than *Populous* is convinced 1991 is going to mean more 1Mb games with a corresponding increase in complexity – games like *Wonderland* and the Bitmaps' forthcoming *Gods*. "There'll be a lot more Amiga-only games using all 32 colours and making better use of the machine as a whole."

Sound, which is still pretty much an afterthought, will become a much more integral part of a game: "It doesn't cost that much, and when more people have 1Mb, more space will be devoted to it."

He thinks fewer games will use a keyboard because Amiga games will have to be designed with console conversions in mind: "You'll just sit down, put your feet up and play in any position. And more hackers, frightened by the legal consequences of what they're doing will write game intro demos professionally."

Peter also has a few personal ambitions: he'd like to shake ET's hand, see Britain become an integral part of Europe ("that way we could have our own space programme"), enjoy peace on Earth, and witness the abolition of semolina.



Pete Molyneux of *Powermonger* fame believes that semolina will be banned.

The Amiga Into 1991



What will 1991 mean for life, the Amiga and everything? These programmers put their predictions on the line...

PSYGNOSIS
IN-HOUSE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Predictions? "Computer games will be bigger and better, though the overall categories (shoot-em-up, strategy, simulation and so on) will generally remain similar." Psygnosis, like everyone else, will quite definitely remain heavily into the Amiga, though 1991 could be a time of transition for them.

In the distant future, Psygnosis' collective voice is convinced that games will become "less anti-social, move from the bedroom into the living room and involve the whole family."

IAN ANDREW
INCENTIVE

"Games will become more sophisticated and take longer to write mainly because of consoles. This means that more Amiga games will make use of the flexibility of the keyboard to produce a more thoughtful product than the consoles can. The 500K machine is so popular 1Mb games won't take off – it just doesn't make sense commercially."

Ian doesn't predict an increase in Amiga-only games, "though port-overs from the ST will still be graphically and sonically enhanced." He'd also like to see "the Amiga with a 68030 chip – and more powerful computers made available for the same amount of money."

GLYNN WILLIAMS
PROGRAMMER OF WARHEAD

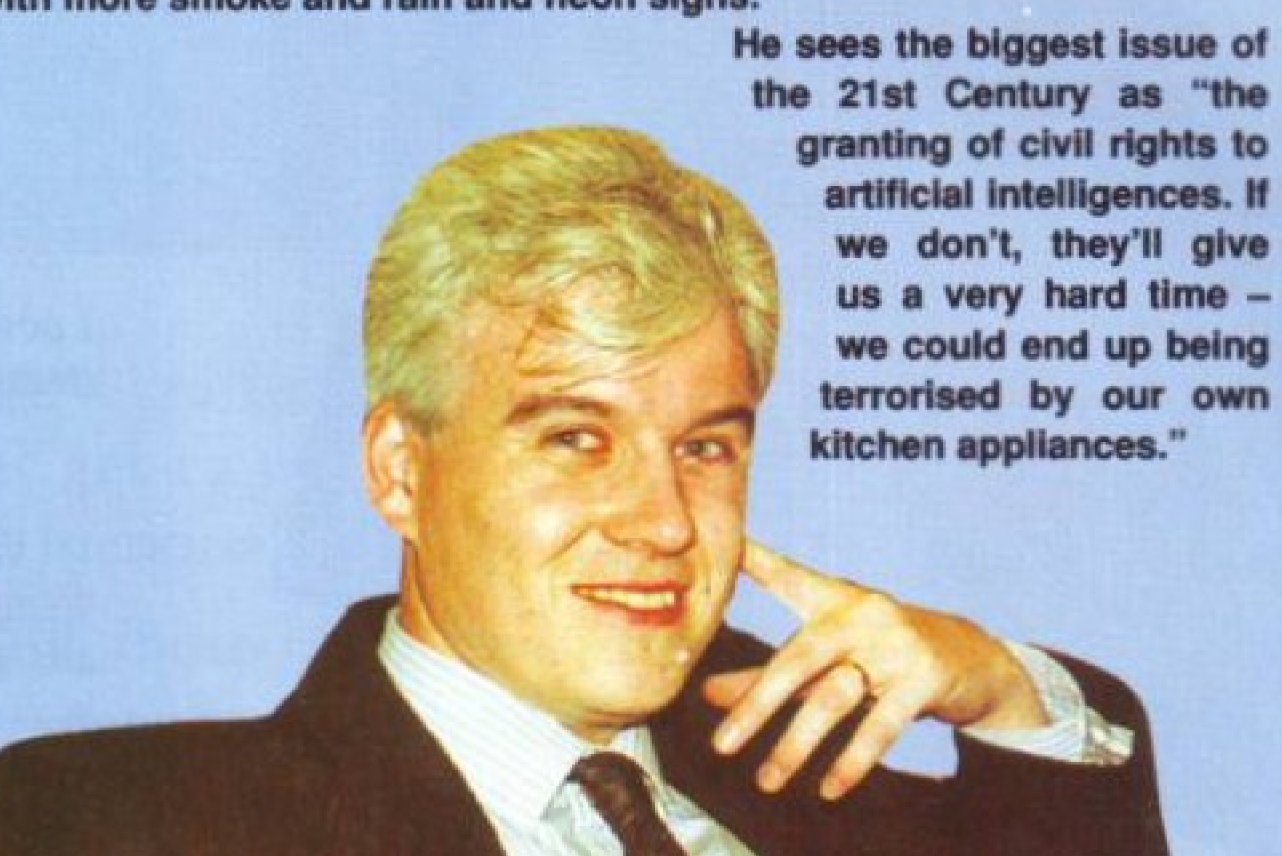
Glynn is an optimist. He thinks the Amiga is technically the nicest 16-bit machine: "It's more competent than the Sega Megadrive. The Amiga will be alive and well in 1991 and predictions that the games market will polarise into Nintendo and PC products are exaggerated: they are two dramatically different machines, so there must be room for a middle ground, and that's exactly where the Amiga is."

He feels that Amiga games "are bound to get better and better and publishers will begin to realise that it takes longer to produce a great product for an Amiga than it did on 8-bit machines."

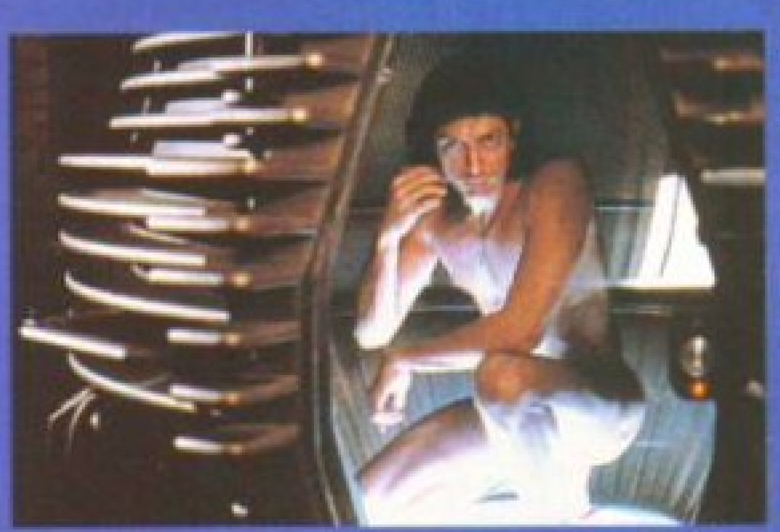
Kitchen Appliances: all set to take over the world?

On an individual level, Glynn would like to see "successful commercial exploration of space because we've been waiting for it for ages. The future should be exactly like a William Gibson novel with flying cars. The world as a whole ought to be more like *Blade Runner* with more smoke and rain and neon signs."

He sees the biggest issue of the 21st Century as "the granting of civil rights to artificial intelligences. If we don't, they'll give us a very hard time – we could end up being terrorised by our own kitchen appliances."



ARCHER MCLEAN
PROGRAMMER OF IK+



Seth Brundle and matter transporter, from *The Fly*. Archer McLean thinks the man who invents an instant transportation gadget will clean up.

Archer, in common with many others, also sees the market shifting towards consoles and the PC, "but the Amiga will carry on. The big software houses already producing the big games will get even bigger and there may be a re-emergence of simple puzzle games with better graphics. The main thing will be addictiveness with the emphasis on simple solutions, co-ordination and physical response."

Personally, he would like to see "a more peaceful world and an expanding space programme, which would let you emigrate to Mars and Jupiter; and whoever invents the matter transporter is bound to get very rich. At one stroke it would simplify long-distance interplanetary travel, eliminate cars, and have a beneficial effect on the environment."

The Best Visions of the Future

Mean Streets.

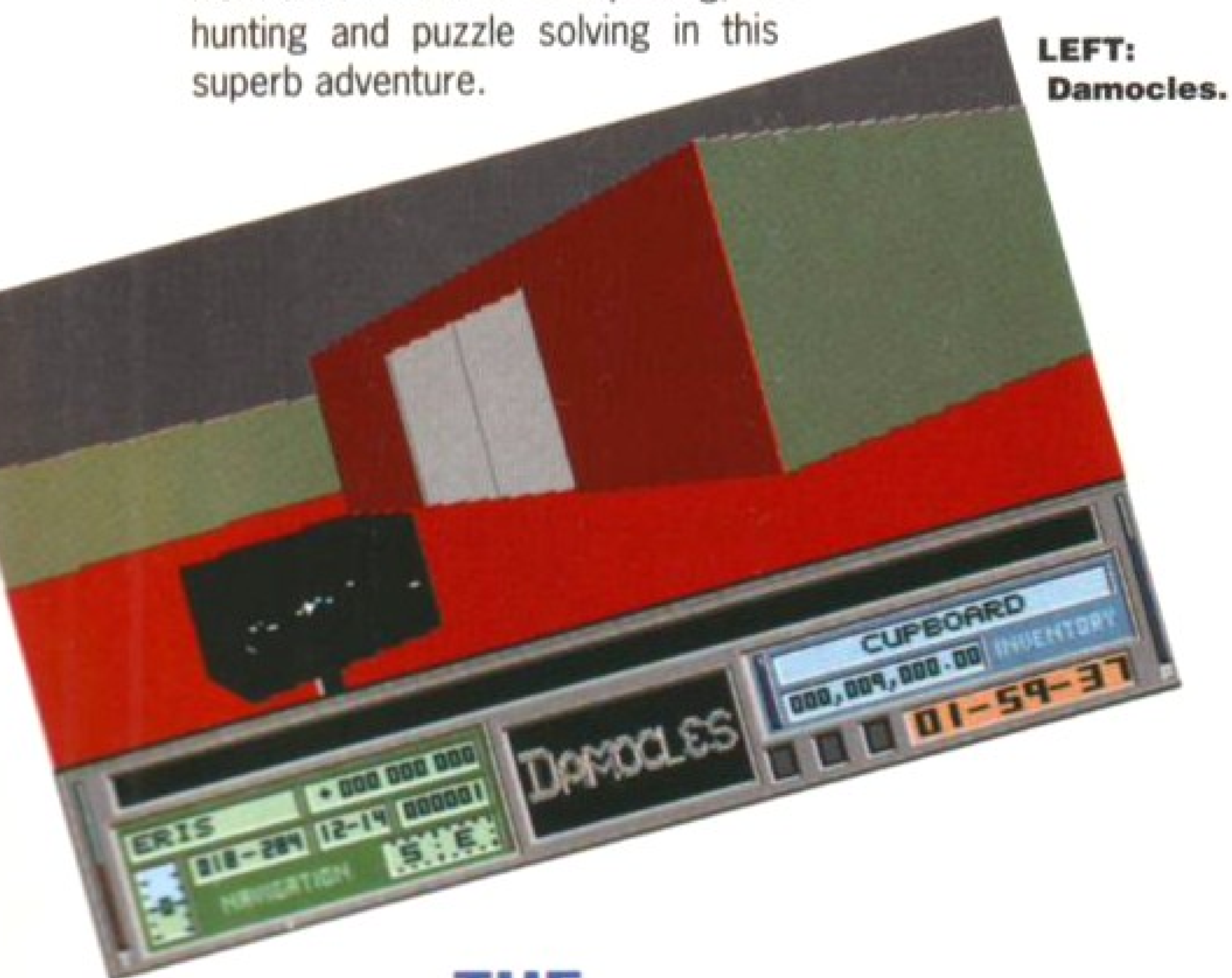
ABOVE: Sim City.

THE PRESENT WITH KNOBS ON VISION

Life goes on much as usual but with lots of gadgets and new technology to play with.

DAMOCLES
Novagen, £24.99, 92% reviewed in *AF* 14

Enter a 3D world full of hi-tech spaceships flying around a deserted planet in imminent danger of destructino from a comet. Lots of exploring, clue hunting and puzzle solving in this superb adventure.



LEFT: Damocles.

THE SPORTING VISION

Blow football is a thing of the past as hi-tech sport takes over.

POWERDROME
Electronic Arts, £24.99, 92% *AF* 1

There are a lot of sporting visions but this one takes vehicular racing to new levels of excitement. Spaceships racing in different planet atmospheres on tracks that go underground and feature tricky obstacles. Tough and demanding, yes, but a graphic masterpiece which is great when you've learnt how to play.



BELOW: Captive.

THE 1984 VISION

It's dark, oppressive, industrial and nasty – it's a very tough place to survive in.

MEAN STREETS
US Gold, £24.99, 88% *AF* 17

A gritty, hard-nosed adventure where you play a private detective on the trail of dirty dealings in future San Francisco. It's not always pretty in a vision like this – you meet some ugly characters – but the play is gripping.

THE GREEN VISION

The world becomes, like, this real harmonious place, ya know what I mean?

SIM CITY
Infogrames, £29.99, 92% *AF* 6

Not exactly an ecologist's dream but a marvellous exercise in sensible town planning. You've got to build a city from scratch, keeping the people happy, pollution and traffic problems under control and economic growth continuing. A brilliant strategy game.

THE DESTRUCTION VISION

I don't like your ugly face, so let's destroy the human race.

RED LIGHTNING
US Gold, £29.99, 90% *AF* 4

Weapons out for the lads as NATO and the Warsaw Pact go head-to-head in World War III and try to destroy as much of the planet as possible. A war game that will test your tactical and strategic skills to the full.

THE ROBOTIC VISION

Metal men are what it's all about, so forget the flesh and get into the hardware.

CAPTIVE
Mindscape, £24.99, 91% *AF* 16

Use all the technology you can get your hands on to construct a robot attack team and rescue yourself from captivity. Dungeons but without the dragons in this slick-looking, futuristic adventure game.

THE CLIFF'S EDGE VISION

The human race battling back from the edge of extinction.

MIDWINTER
MicroProse, £24.95, 92% *AF* 12

In the wake of a meteorite that devastated the Earth a tiny band of humans survive in the resulting ice age. Typically enough they're still fighting amongst themselves, in a complex strategy game that immerses you in a believable game world.

THE ALIEN THREAT VISION

Those naughty, slimy, green aliens are out to destroy our lovely green-blue planet.

WARHEAD
Activision, £24.99, 88% *AF* 10

A vicious race of insectoid creatures is planning to stomp the humans. Fly your weapon-laden, experimental fighter craft through a series of filled-3D missions to stomp on them first.

THE CYBERPUNK VISION

Jacking into hi-tech worlds where reality is virtual.

INTERPHASE
Imageworks, £29.95 (but free with this issue), 88% *AF* 4

You've already got a copy of this cyberpunk vision – it's on one of the Coverdisks. So to find out what a fascinating vision this is just turn to Page 173 and experience an extraordinary and unusual game.

THE MEGALOMANIAC VISION

Man gets his act together and decides to stomp the rest of the universe, sweeping alien races and other human colonies away.

SUPREMACY
Virgin, £29.95, 90% *AF* 15

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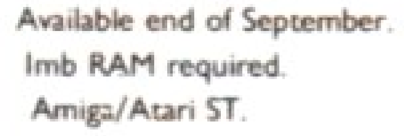
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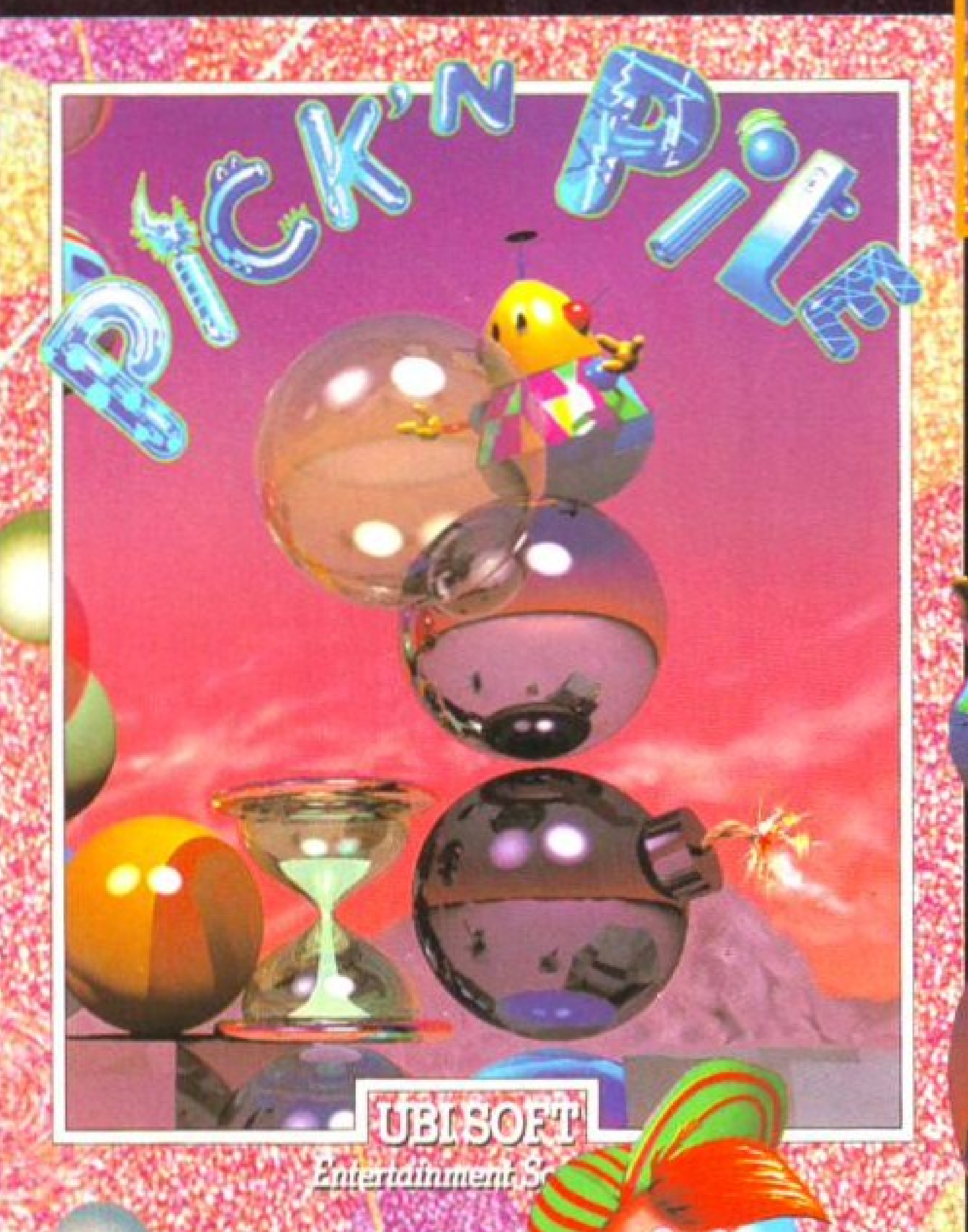
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SCREEN PLAY

With Amiga games becoming ever more diverse and complex, the *Amiga Format* reviews system is designed to be flexible enough to accommodate all styles and genres. We give one overall score, which reflects how good each game really is. This score is accompanied with a short list of the game's good and bad points, highlighting those elements that make it stand out from the crowd and those parts which really annoy. These points are then fully expanded and explained in the main review.

Format will, whenever possible, only review completely finished software. This means we see the version that ends up on the shop shelves, the version you buy. Waiting for finished games does occassionally mean that reviews of some Amiga products appear in other magazines before *Format*. Our review though, will be an authorative statement of what a game *is* like, not speculation as to what it *may* be like.

The reviews team is headed by Trenton Webb and Maff Evans. Trenton had a long history in the world of 8-bit games reviewing on *Amstrad Action* before moving up into the big league for *AF* 14. Maff Evans joined the team on *AF7*, after a heroic tour of duty with *ZZap 64*. They are backed up with a highly experienced team of specialist reviewers from Future Publishing's crop of market-leading computer titles.



Strider goes head-to-head with the level guardian. Ideally he should be a robot (as seen on the left of the score box) but two of the requisite power pods were missed. He still flashes orange and tries to change, but without the power-ups the transformation cannot be completed and he has to use his more normal skills with the sword and gun. Luckily, he has also picked up a more powerful beam weapon to help rid himself of the alien scourge. Die hard Striders though will insist on finishing the flying machine with sword alone, which isn't that tough because the guy is really weedy. The really hard part was getting there in the first place, with enough energy and time to do the job.

STRIDER II

US Gold ■ £24.99 Joystick

"You dare fight me?" This introductory game phrase still haunts legions of *Strider I* fans. Now the man with the bad attitude and big sword is back fighting evil for the good of mankind. You know it's going to be messy, but fun.

The plot insists that the acrobatic assault trooper is out to rescue the world's president from a band of alien rogues. These pranksters have kidnapped her and hold her in their five-level world. Strider must beat his way through forests, towers, caverns, generating stations and finally a giant space ship to rescue her. Justice must be done, besides he gets to kill thousands of slimey, bug-eyed, scuzballs into the bargain!

Gun ho!

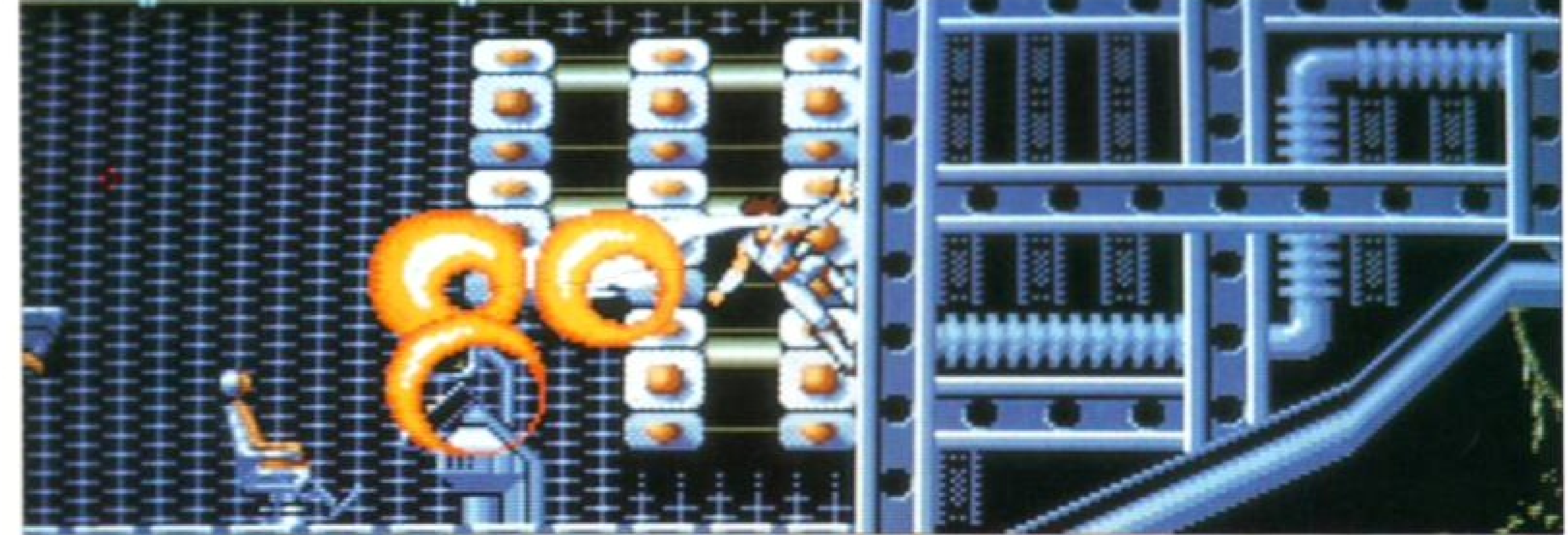
Strider has been in training since mission one. No longer limited to a titanium blade, he now gets a gyro-laser pistol to reap with too. When he's running, hitting the fire button sends his sword scything ahead, swathing through anything or one. If he stands still, or crouches for cover, Strider whips out his laser pistol and pumps shots at his foes. He is a more balanced hero now, able to murder either from a distance or close enough to feel their last alien breath.

The boy's made sacrifices to gain these new powers, namely the loss of his death slide – skiding in low, kicking and killing anyone who stood in the way. This close-combat flexibility has been traded-off for long-range fire power, at the cost of head-to-head thrills.

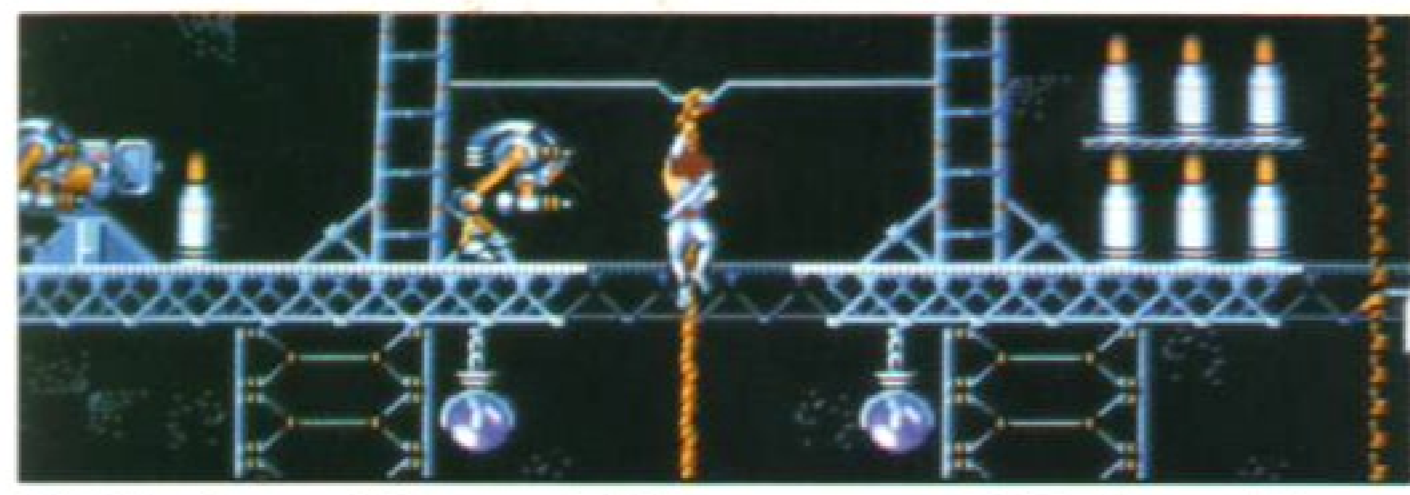
The acrobatic somersault leaps are still there, where the lad tumbles through the air, killing as he spins. Not only a vital gameplay element, but they are also what made the man famous. These spinning jumps are central to Strider's chances of success giving him the ability to leap over ground attacks with poise, ease and grace. Allowing Strider to bypass all those nasty, hard-to-kill beasties that have the nerve to sap his energy while he sticks a sword in their heads.

Transformers: Sprites in Disguise

Strider II is, generically speaking, a high speed, horizontal scrolling come platform battle. There's one more thing however, one little secret that only reveals itself when he picks up every power pod on a level. Then, when he goes head-to-head with the end-of-level guardian, he doesn't have to worry about his frail, physical frame getting all busted up because he turns into a robot. Then it's trashing time.



Strider struts his climbing stuff again. Here in the ship half way through level one he is on the trail of the power pods that will let him become a robot. In this room number two pod can be found on the floor. It has the nice effect of giving him extra health which is just what he'll need to defeat the tank that lives two floors up and guards another of those elusive transforming capsules.



Climbing is one of the sword-shifters new moves. It is slow and therefore dangerous but does allow him to access more of the alien tower. This time he has a problem in the form of an ED 209 waiting for him at the top. Size isn't everything, though, and one quick slice with that famous titanium blade will soon cut the metal monster down to size.



Level two proves to be no easier or quieter than the first. He must make it to that rope and climb if he is to progress any further, but first that bird must be killed. The men behind him are just sword fodder but the birdie is best killed with the gyro laser. For a metal avian half our heroes size they do an awful lot of damage and should be avoided.

The pods are worth collecting anyway, as they give Strider extra health, drone protection, extra lives and more firepower. And although the guardians are beatable without robo-power, it makes life so much easier when he turns into tin.

Strider I was a steady, slashing affair because the boy's mission was simply to infiltrate – by kicking his way into – a Soviet base and then to get killing. *II's* rescue theme means that this one has a more frantic edge. Strider actually runs this time, which is just as well because those enemy guys come for him at a thick and fast speed, eager for his blood.

A Time to Die

With its tight time-limits *Strider II* stresses the importance of maps. You have to know the right route, or valuable seconds will be spent killing aliens in the wrong area. Then, even though he is still standing, Strider will die as the time limit expires. This is a factor further exasperated if you try to collect the power-ups. Pixel-perfect murder is needed if you're going to get to the guardian on time.

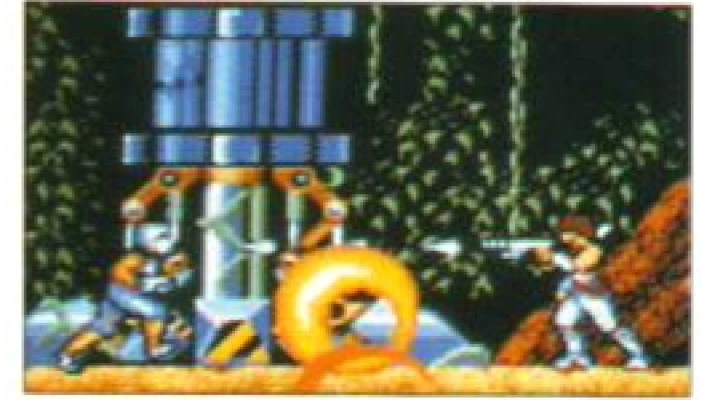
Strider lost some of his graphic appeal when he lost his slide. Before he was silly but hard, now he's just hard. The sprite moves well, leaping and killing with clarity and precision but then so do other heroes of more mundane games. Strider's ability to do daft jumps and other unusual things set him apart from the crowd. While the other graphics have been improved for this sequel, some of the magic has been lost.

Strider II is a fast paced veteran's chop-em-up that will wear many joysticks down in the drive for completion. Yet the desire to get to the end is diminished, a fact which correlates with the main characters loss of charisma. It is an enjoyable test of joystick skill, but doesn't attain the classic status enjoyed by its forerunner. The inclusion of the gun has somehow made the guy more normal and that is just what wasn't needed.

Trenton Webb



Ooops! Strider perishes and flies off in a cloud of smoke, exactly the same as in the first game of the series. With no lives left the bad news really is that he will once again have to fight off all the foes from level one if he is to progress any further in exploring the two towers. Two Towers? Strider? Now where have we heard that before?



Have gun will shoot. If Strider stands still he whips out his gun and starts blasting. The gun has a good range but is slow and leaves Strider exposed.



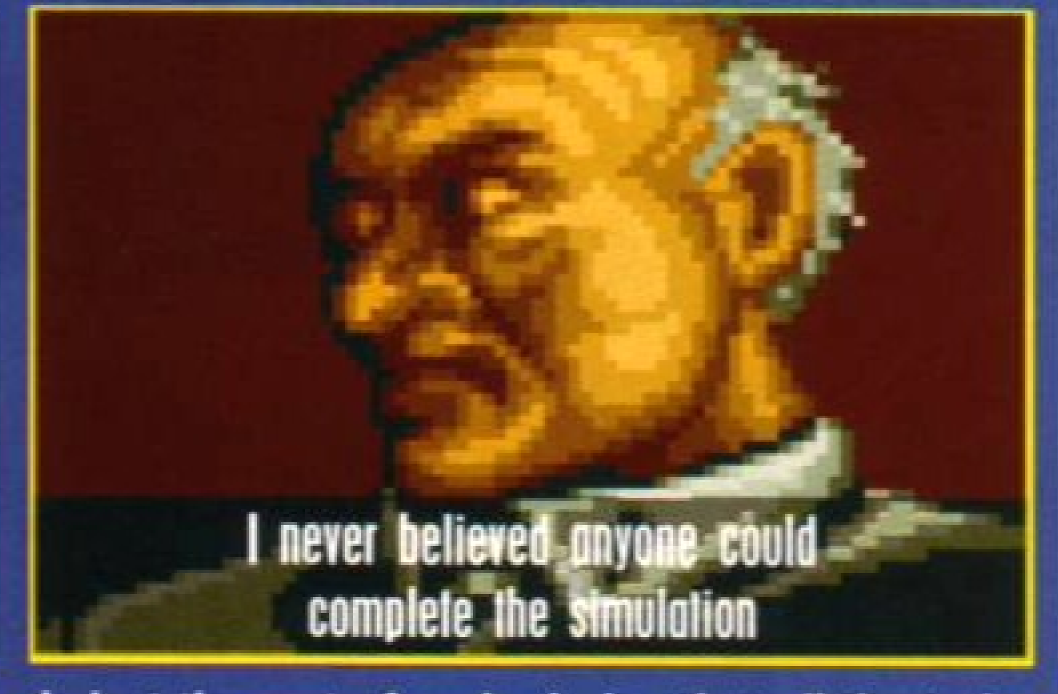
You've got to jump! The leaps that made Strider famous are back and sillier than ever. With one quick tweak of the stick he can leap over half a screen avoiding all ground-based nasties. Of course he can't be sure that where he lands will be safe, but it's better to worry about that when he touches down. Besides it's always good for a laugh.



The woods are lonely, dark and deep, and Strider has time-limits to keep. It may not be as poetic as Frost but he's more effective. Anyway this must finally prove that the sword is at least as mighty as the pen when it comes down to some serious Amiga based action.

The Real Thing

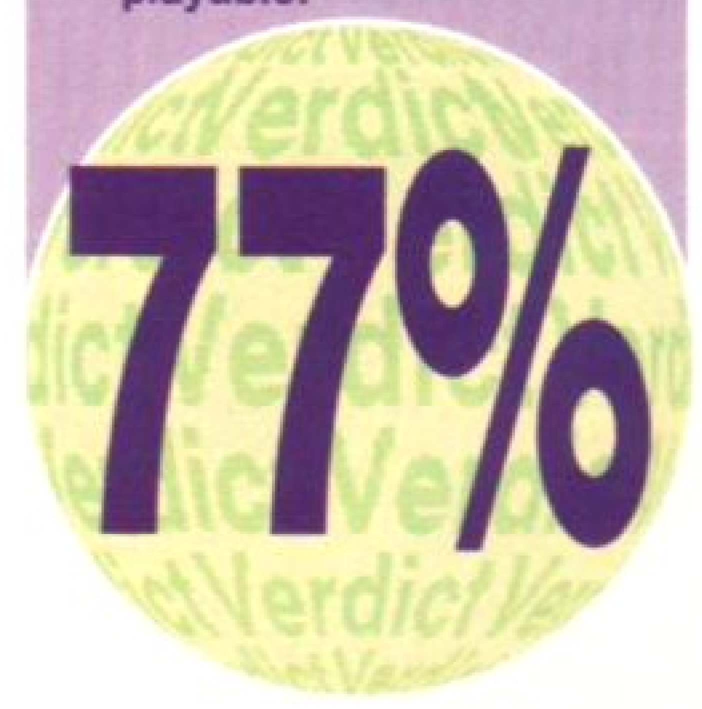




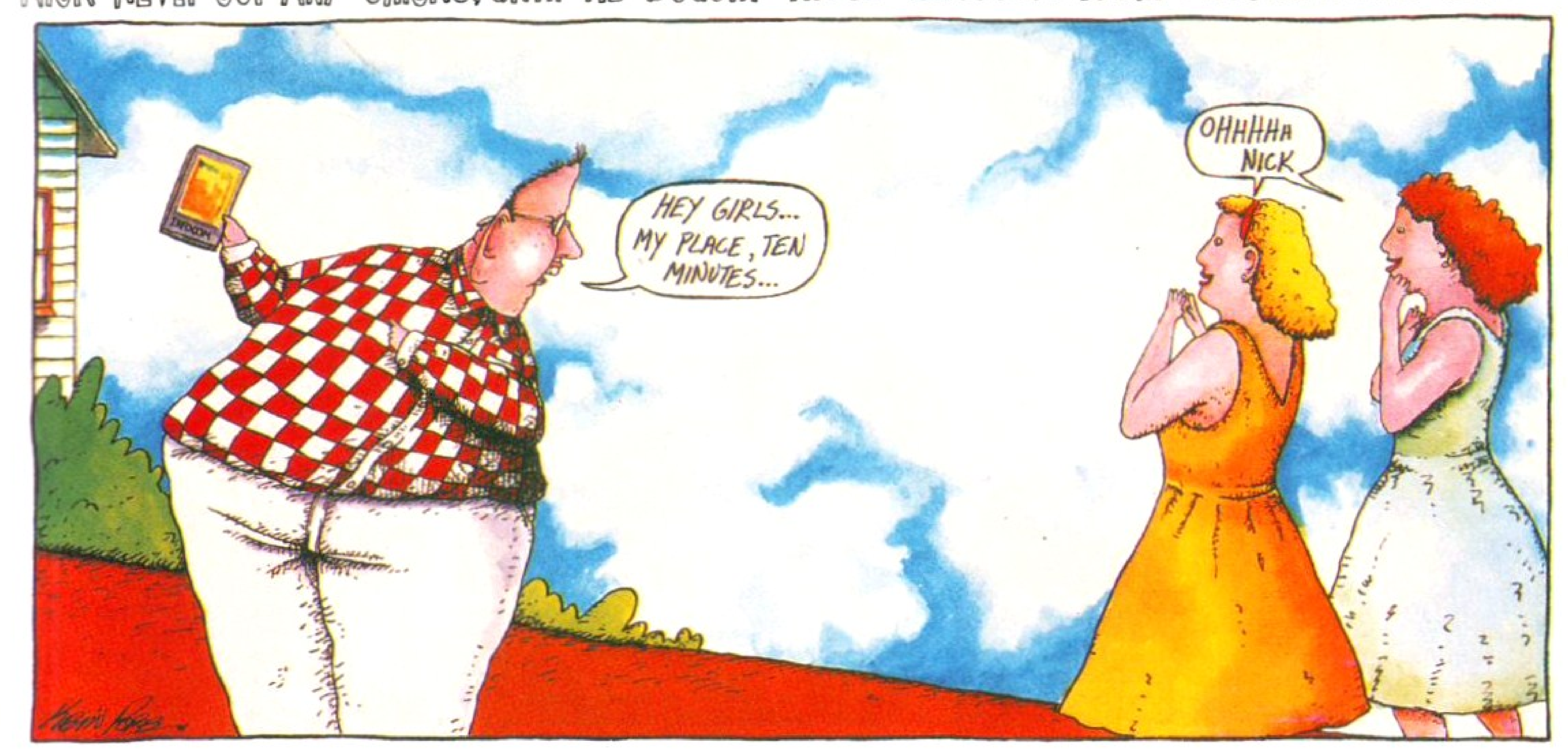
This time it is for real! *Strider I* started off as a raiding mission on a Soviet base, but if it was played through to completion a terrible secret was revealed. The whole game was a simulation set to test would-be warriors! A dry run, it didn't really matter if he lived or died. *Strider II* is just the sort of real mission that all the training was supposed to prepare for. So remember, failure here means death and not just a low test score, because this time it's the real thing. Makes you think, or at least run a hell of a lot faster doesn't it?

VERDICT

- Hard core arcade action played at an exciting pace.
- *Strider II* lacks the charisma of the original.
- Can be played two ways: to reach the next level or to collect power pods.
- A double challenge in one package.
- Gun feature is an ineffective and unexciting addition to the armoury.
- Sequel falls short of the original, but is still highly playable.

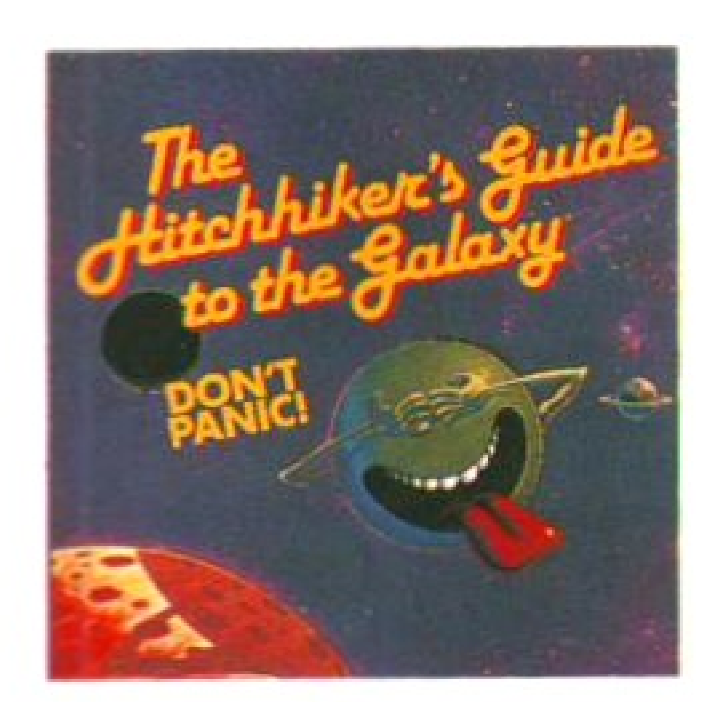


Nick never got any chicks, until he bought those Infocom from Mastertronic games

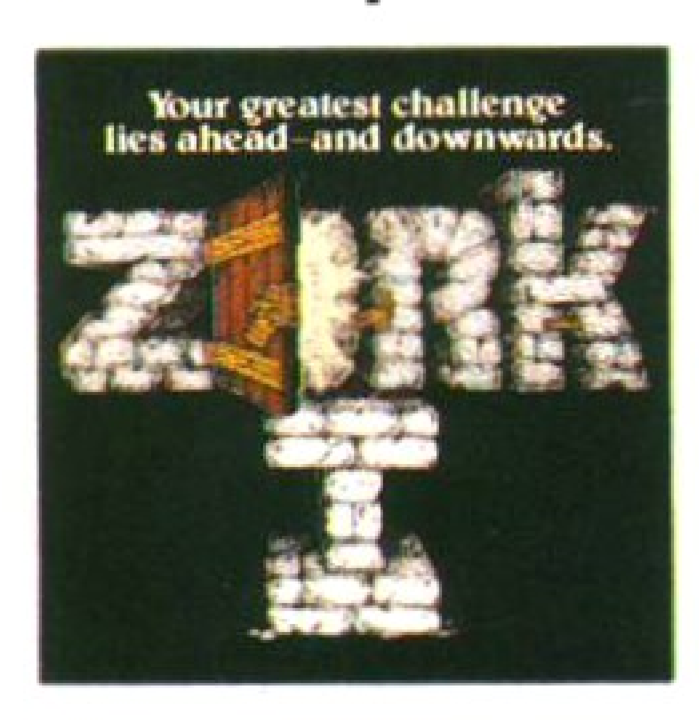


NOW THE ONLY LIMIT IS YOUR IMAGINATION

Classic Infocom Interactive fiction is back – at an irresistible price.



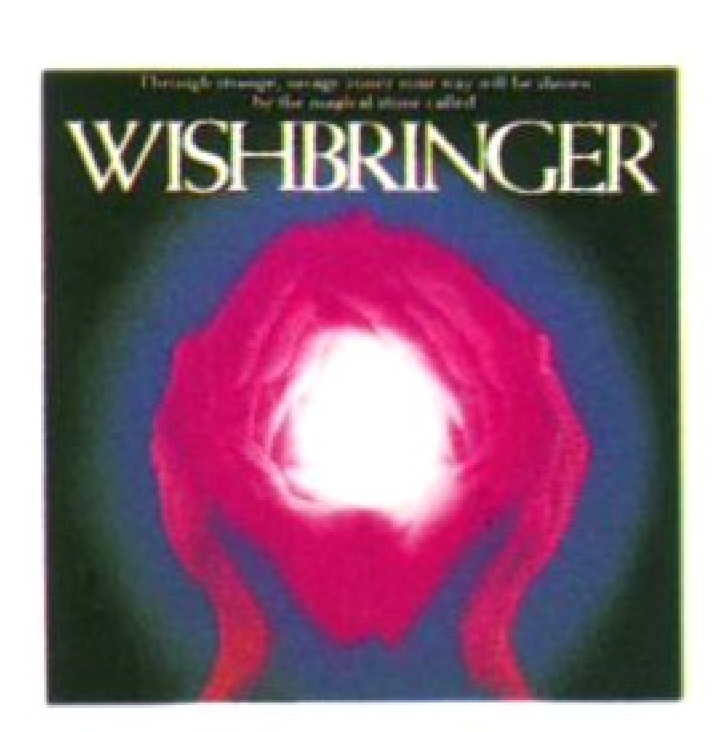
HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY -
You play the role of hapless Arthur Dent in this mind-bogglingly hilarious story by the best-selling author Douglas Adams. You'll chortle while your planet is demolished, yelp with laughter when threatened by the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal and split your sides as you search the galaxy for a decent cup of tea.



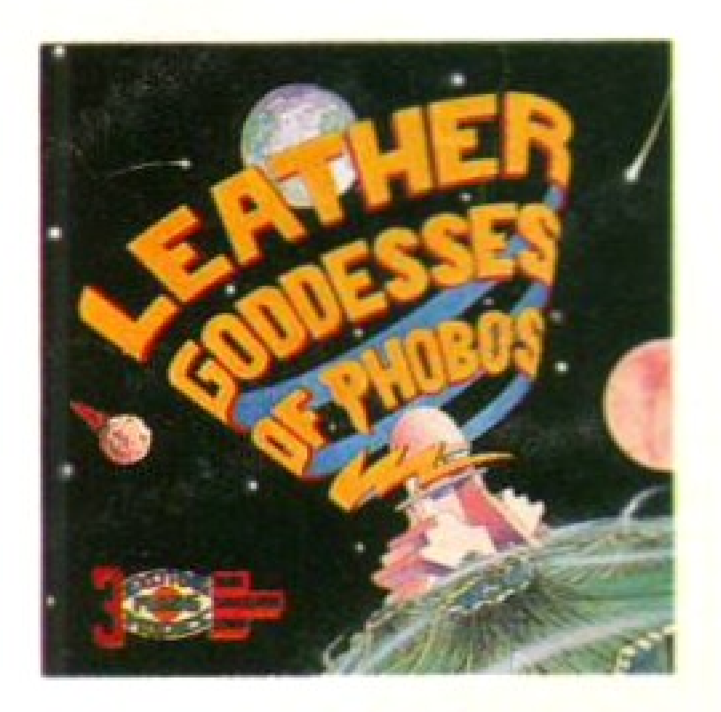
ZORK I -
This phenomenally popular story plunges you into the extraordinary environs of the Great Underground Empire in search of incomparable treasures. You'll come face to face with outlandish creatures as you make an amazing odyssey with so many twists it can offer new surprises every time you explore it.



PLANETFALL -
In this sci-fi comedy, you're a stellar Patrol Ensign 7th class - as low as you can go. Then your luck takes a turn for the better. Your patrol ship explodes. True, the mysterious, deserted world to which you're jettisoned is plagued by floods, pestilence and a mutant Wild Kingdom, but you'll have Floyd, a mischievous robot, to help you find the secret to saving it.



WISHBRINGER -
You begin as an ordinary mail clerk delivering a mysterious random note and end up - magic stone in hand - embarking on a remarkable series of whimsical adventures. You'll need all the wishes that the stone will grant you, because your final destination is somewhere beyond your wildest dreams.



LEATHER GODDESES OF PHOBOS -
You've been kidnapped by minions of the fiendish Leather Goddesses of Phobos who are plotting to turn the earth into their private pleasure palace. Succeed in escaping their clutches and you'll begin a naughty, bawdy and very amusing romp across the solar systerm. Your mission is to collect the materials you'll need to defeat the Leather Goddess and save humanity from their dastardly plan.

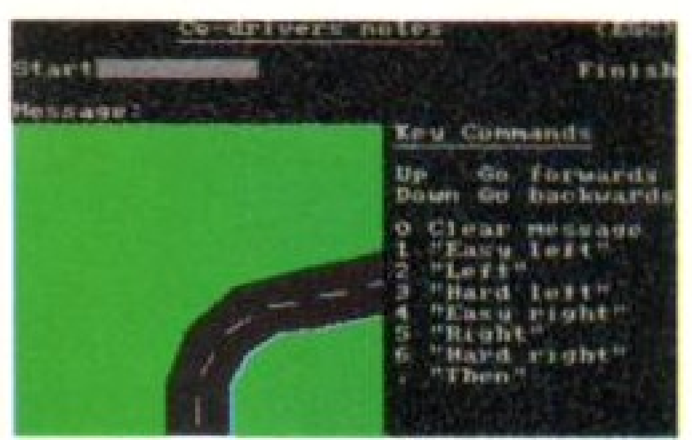
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Screaming along in your automobile. This is the English roads se where driving is hard but not impossible. Here the gear change is automatic which explains the gear stick's absence from the bott left-hand corner of the screen. Steering is accompanied with the graphics rotating. Centring after a turn can either be done manua by "clicking". The feel of the oversteer is best controlled manuall



Here the road planning section is in use. You can program the navigator to use his limited repertoire to see you through. Useful but limited.

TOYOTA CELICA RALLY

Gremlin £24.99 ■ Joystick and Mouse

It doesn't take much imagination for a driver to see himself, and his vehicle, as stage leaders in a cross-country rally when he's got a piece of A-road to himself on a Sunday afternoon. Gremlin know this too. A good rally game is just what the car-racing game enthusiasts want and the Sheffield bits 'n' bytes bunch are only too happy to oblige.

Enter *Toyota Celica Rally*. You're offered a choice of either race or practice on three different courses set in England, Norway and Mexico. On the latter races are beset by harsh sn sand-storms but your vehicle's wipers can deal with these conditions. Control can be toggled and, the first time I played, I opted for joystick and practice - never let it be said that reviewers don't dive in at the deep end. Just for comfort, I set off on English roads.



Ice and snow make Norway hard to drive around. This not only affects the vision (use those wipers) but handling too.



Mexico: things are even worse here. The wipers don't clear the screen and now that last crash has smashed your glass.

Skid Marks

My navigator was strapped into the sound chip, a collection of cued sampled imperatives like, "Hard left." He didn't mumble a single over-sampled syllable before we set off. Thankfully, he didn't snort when I stalled either. But he was not much better at calling than I was at driving. Once I found fifth – and I was loathe to change down from it, even if I was only doing forty – I wanted to be given more detailed road data than just simply "left" or "right".

The problem with the navigator, it turned out, was that he would call directions at the same point on the route every time, regardless of the speed at which we approached a corner. What he should have done was call later if we were travelling too slowly, or earlier if the car was travelling too quickly. As it happened he gave me the calls at such inconvenient times, given that I was almost useful ana welcome as a bad back-seat driver's ear-ache.

Next time, can we have a navigator who gets nervous with reckless drivers? It ought to be easy. Even though you can take a look at a route prior to the start of a real race and prime your navigator to issue specific commands at certain points, it's a feature which doesn't help much.

On the whole, the Celica itself could really do the business, as you would expect. It gave a good, early impression of its road-holding characteristics and accelerated at a satisfyingly manic pace, though changing down proved to be a problem which continually made me lose time.

Write-Off

I wrote-off one machine, parking it in the front window of someone's cottage following a quick experiment in aqua-planing. This highlighted the most annoying factor of the game, the overly harsh time-keeping. If you slide off the road, the engine loses revs, you balletically spin and the wheels lose traction. All these factors consume valuable driving seconds. Yet when you are placed back on the road the game docks another 20 seconds for going off course. Real rallying is about getting from A to B quickly not about keeping perfectly on the road.

Toyota Celica Rally definitely requires acquired skill if you're going to get the most enjoyment from it but you may well be put off before then. The game itself does not give a clear impression of speed, and it's necessary to adjust to this before you can really get to grips with the rally-sim potential. The sound is the only feature that comes close to capturing the atmosphere of a mad four-wheel dash through the country. Mastering control of the Celica is not beyond the wildest dreams of the ham-fisted, but I imagine there will be much chewing of bottom lips during the frustrating process of getting to grips with it.

A really good rally game is still waiting to be made but if you can't wait any longer, this should keep you happy. It has some problems but it also has the potential to keep would-be boy racers safely off the streets and on their Amigas and although the crashes are annoying they are definitely safer.

Sean Masterson

VERDICT

- Too much time is docked for off-road jaunts.
- Navigator feature falls short of the potential.
- Realistic handling which requires loads of opposite lock steering.
- Accelerates well but changing down is time consuming.
- A reasonable rally sim, but far from perfect.



Building your Empire: a step by step guide



First use the map to find a country to take over. You ideally want one with as few enemies as possible, so you've got plenty of time to get the hang of this despotism lark.



Your captain only has a few troops and one tower under his command. To check your man's current status click once on his medals.



Clicking anywhere on the current land lets you spy on the Island. You need to find if they have any food, defenders, workshops or boats. They all may be useful later.

POWERMONGER

ELECTRONIC ARTS ■ £29.99 Mouse

The big quake shook the world's power structure to its foundations. Not only was the land reformed but the fragile alliances that ensured peace were shattered. Now three new leaders want to take over by usurping your rightful place as the future king. They have already exploited the natural disaster to grab many of your holdings, but, with great skill and cunning, it may just be possible to reconquer the world land by land.

In each of the 195 separate lands you have, under your control, a small band of loyal troops. Each is lead by a captain, who exercises absolute power on your behalf. They are icon-ordered agents who will rebuild your empire. In the tougher lands, they also recruit sub-captains, who they control, to help overcome the manifold problems that lay on the road to power.

As Far as the Eye Can See

All of a captain's actions are acted out on a magnified section of a relief map, which is displayed on the table in front of them. It details what is happening in a land and can be zoomed in on to aid decision making. The captains are displayed as red-caped figures accompanied by a small body of troops who doggedly obey every order.

You are a Powermonger and you give orders to the 'Boss' captain who relays the command to subordinate captains, who then detail their men to do the deed. Messages are carried by pigeon which proves that *Powermonger* is a game of strategy not speed.

A land is captured when your captain controls two thirds of the population. Strategy involves winning the hearts and minds of the folks by kindness or alliance. and then by putting everyone to the sword. Either way your enemies are robbed of manpower and you win. Once a majority is achieved that land is yours and the game pitches another, more difficult, country your way.

AMIGA FORMAT GOLD

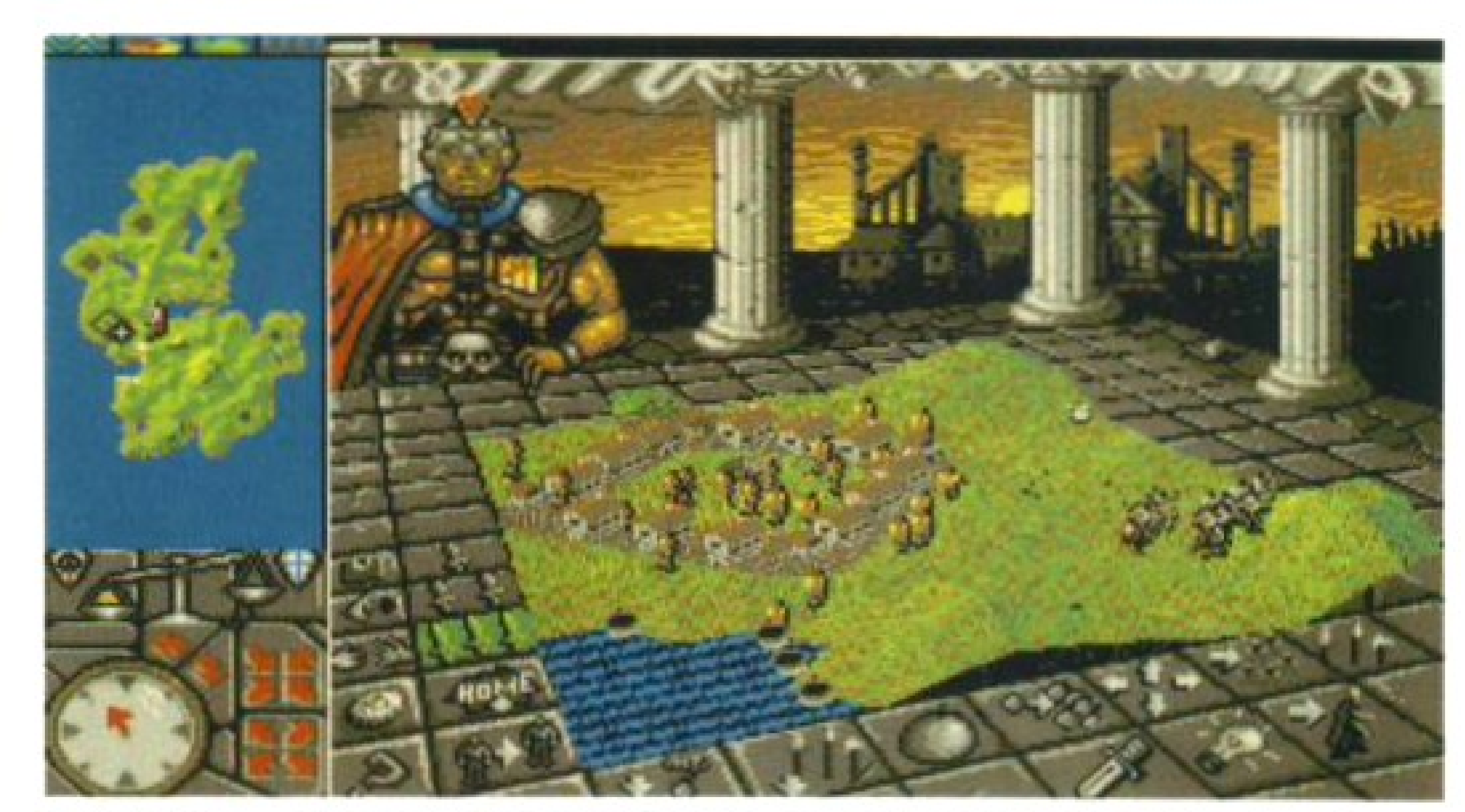
New lands must be conquered with a fresh captain.

Peace Bread and Land (Well Maybe)

Each land is constituted of peasants, towns and other armies. The peasants, suffering their historical



You give your orders to your two captains. They in turn tell your troops (the little guys wearing white) what to do. It may seem like a long-winded system, but look on the bright side it keeps you well away from the battlefield and all those nasty sword things. Thing is, you have to send orders by carrier pigeon and they take ages ...

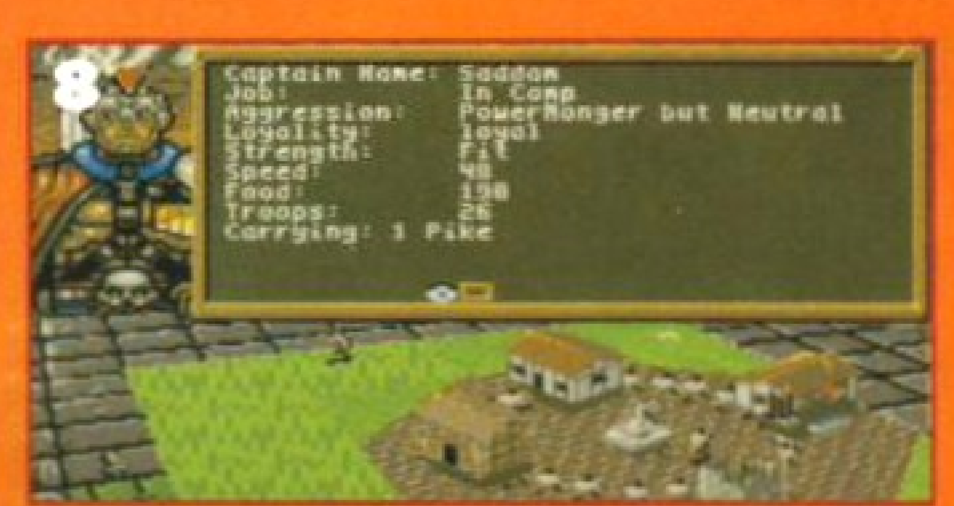


Your team – in the white away strip – are attacking the reds. You have bows and pikes but they have a severe numbers advantage. Your troops do have better training and so can be considered to be 50% better than their bumpkin opponents. It still pays to be as aggressive as possible, though, when the odds are this bad.

The leader now wants to get inventing in the workshop. What he produces depends on the village, who is present and his aggression rating.



Having invented pikes the whole crew's packed. The one pike left over can either be stored or taken for a future recruit. The boys wait in camp.

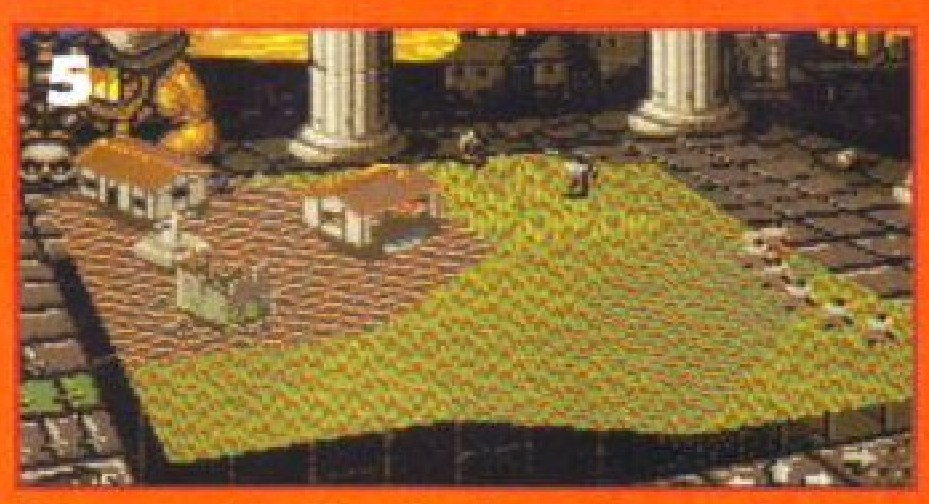


Fully armed it is time to hit the second village and claim the entire island. Via the attack icon the army is told to go and give the village 'a taste of cold steel'.

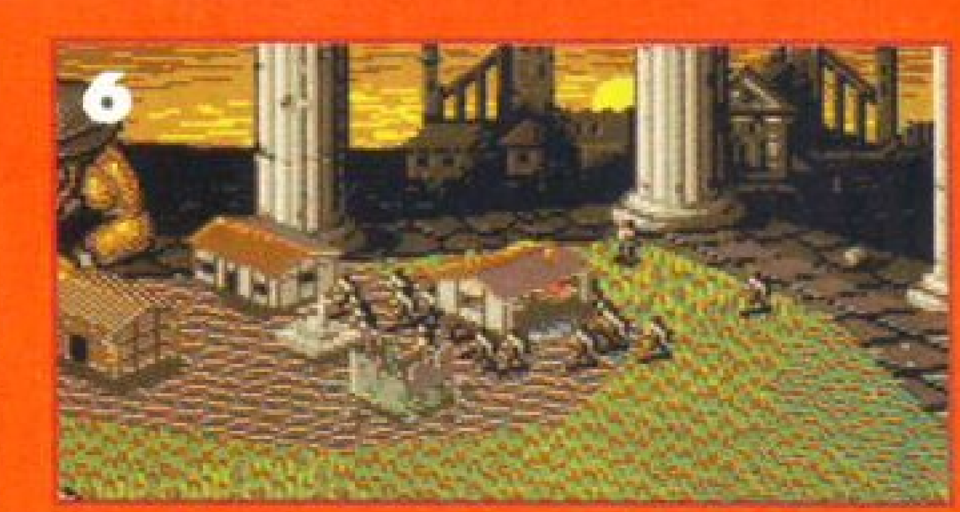




Having determined that the town is weak and has a workshop, attack! To move the army send the captain via the 'move' icon to the place you want to go. Your troops dutifully follow, even when it's raining!



Whenever inactive the 'boys' form a circle around their leader. When better equipped they will sit in concentric circles that indicate which weapons they are carrying.



Charge! Using the 'attack' command your army defeats the villagers and storms the town. Depending on the aggression rating some of the villagers may be left alive to work for you.

ot supply the food and manpower for conquest. They're a simple bunch who follow the guy with the biggest army. However, until you prove your power they fight for their old captain. Some show of aggression is necessary to win even the smallest 'ville to your cause and depending on the posture (aggression setting) of your captain they can either be slaughtered or spared for conscription into your own forces.

Captured towns have a number of uses for a budding dictator. They can be raided for food and men or serve as a workshop for building the tools of conquest. Villages can be given food, stockpiles of weapons or de-ranked (demobbed) troopers to form a stronger defence force and because 'invention' (making stuff) is only possible in workshops, even the buildings become vital to your success in *Powermonger*.

Each game centres on increasing the number of villages under your direct control and weakening rival Powermongers by either war or alliance. Trade and espionage can also be utilised, where appropriate, to strengthen your grip.

Land of the Little People

Watching the little people go to war on your behalf is fun. They bimble around killing each other,

Continued overleaf ▶



So what do all those icons do?

Disk Options – All the twiddly bits a lord needs eg. multi-play games, replay and pause.

Spy – Sends a captain to gather information on opposing force's town.

Alliance – Lets you join forces with other captains.

Trade – Allows trade with parties who you have not fought. Trade may be for weapons or goods, depending on the captain's posture and the surplus stock they carry.

Query – Allows you to check out buildings and who controls them.

Posture (aggressive, neutral, passive) – The more swords the more aggressive a captain is. It ranges from one to three.

Go home – Sends a captain back to his home town while keeping the army intact. A useful way for wimping out of battles!

Transfer men – Reassigns men from one captain to another. The number transferred depends on the captain's posture.

Get food – Sends your army into a friendly village to gather food. How much they take depends on the captain's posture.

Supply food – Sends a captain to drop food at a chosen location.

Drop food – Leaves a cache of food in a friendly village for later.

Drop invention – Drops surplus stock in a friendly village.

De-rank – Depending on the captain's posture a proportion of his army are disbanded.

Attack – The level of aggression is determined by the captain's posture.

Equip invention – Once invented objects must be collected. Some villages also have goodies that can be liberated this way.

Get men – Recruits men to a captain's army.

Send Captain – Commands captain to move. His men automatically follow.

Invent – If there is a workshop in a town a captain controls he can trade goods or weapons.

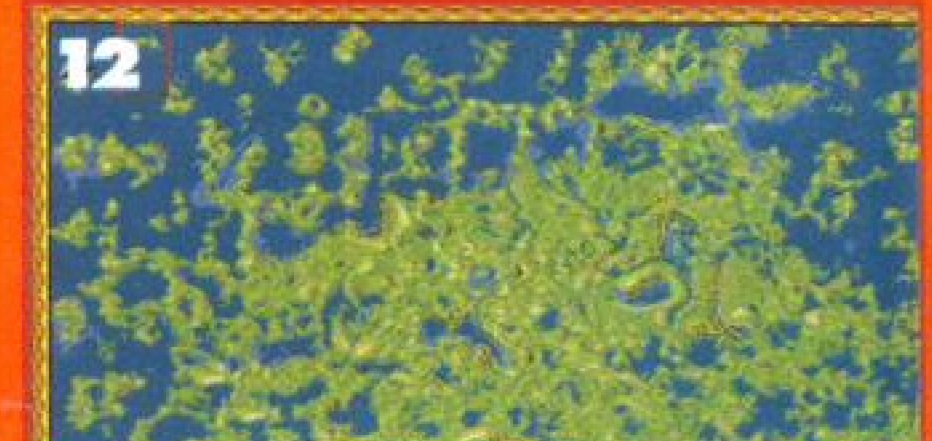
As your team hit the second village the defeated armies' ghosts are seen floating off heavenward. You now control the whole place. Look at the scales of power, to check.



Check the game options and 'retire'. The victory screen will follow. Then select the continue conquest option from the menu then follows. This will bring up the map screen.



Select 'Continue conquest' and move to any adjacent area. The choice: where in the world is ripe for conquest. Hmmm! Next door looks nice! The knife shows captured areas.

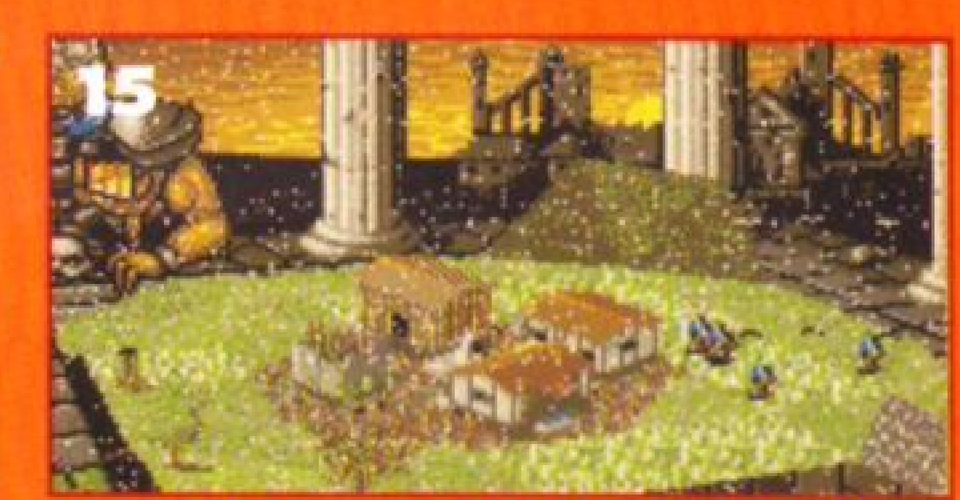




Having arrived you'll find that none of the goodies from the previous land have been carried over. That captain is too busy taking care of his own island. This one must be won from scratch again. Maybe attacking that lone red is a good idea?



It's worth taking the precaution of looking before you leap! Why? Because next door there is a red village that's eager to fight back.



The miffed villagers want to make a fight of it. You're winning but that snow hasn't helped, and your boys are getting cut up .

becoming ghosts, frightening birds, chopping down trees and murdering sheep. They illustrate the implications of your decisions and give life-saving clues. Both the scenery and its inhabitants are interactive with a purpose and history, until you alter destiny's course that is!

The interactive element of the game is also highlighted by your captain's reaction to orders. Each land is an enormous logistic puzzle and certain steps must be taken to ensure success. If you give a captain an order that doesn't readily fit this pattern, or put him in mortal danger, his 'Yeah' acknowledgements become decidedly muted (if he replies at all). An order which fits the pattern however, is greeted with the most enthusiastic reply.

Populous Too!

As the puzzles of each land unravel it becomes clear *Powermonger* is a direct, if very different, descendant of *Populous*. The little people are charming and they make fascinating viewing. Their actions are deliberately slow, imitating the logistical difficulties of conquest.

The world you want to conquer is large and the chunks it comes in frequently seem too big to handle. The parameters are flexible enough to embroil would-be world beaters in battle and trade for years. Yet there are already supplementary-data disks planned.

The drive for world domination will suit those who love clever graphics, amusing sound and masses of gameplay. It takes time to get used to the way this world works. After the initial headaches and frustrated cries, world domination is yours. ***Trenton Webb***

Finding out where, how and who you are in Powermonger.

Maps – Contour, settlements, objects and food. Click to get the lowdown on a land.

Red arrow – Shows which captain is currently being given orders.

Current activity – Pictorial representation of the captain's current activity.

Status bars – Blue shows how much food he carries, red how many men and green the captain's personal health (zero = death).

Medals – Click to check a captain's status.

Chest – Click to centre the game map on a captain. It helps avoid confusion.

Overview map – The main map. Click on it and the game map shows a close-up of that area.

Balance of power – The scales show who commands most men.

Rotate map – Useful for getting a good look at the game map.

Move game map – Moves game map in the direction of the arrow.

Zoom in/out – Gives close-ups of the game maps.

Your men – Waiting for an order from the captain at the top of the table

Game display. This is where the game unfolds.

It takes two...

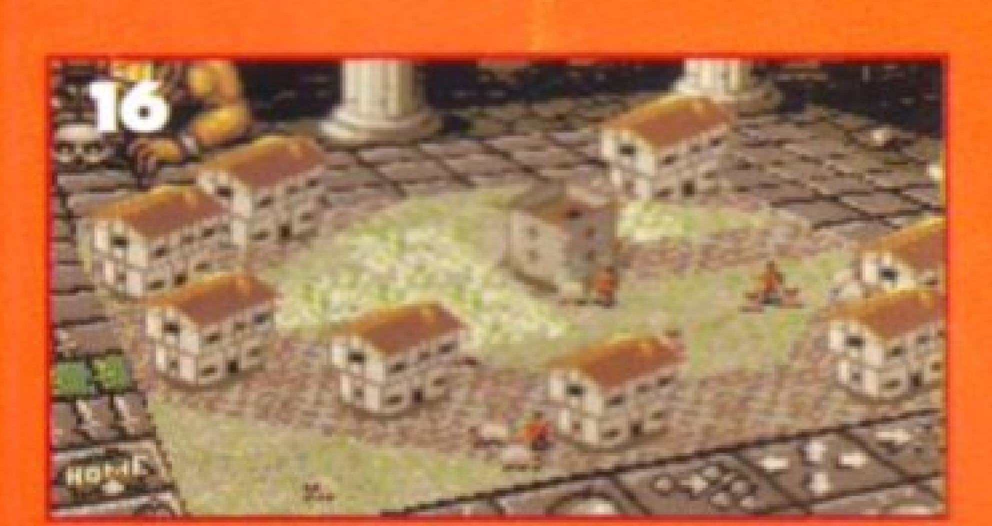
Two human players using two Amigas can monger the power out of each other simultaneously by using a null-modem cable to connect their machines via serial ports. Or if the players are separated by distance a modem connected to the phone will do. Naturally both players will need an original copy of *Powermonger* but it's worth the investment.

VERDICT

- Stunning marriage of innovative graphics and original game.
- Highly flexible package of good ideas and game design.
- Funny, violent and noisy!
- Initially complex, but persevere it's worth it!
- With 195 lands to conquer and a datalink option this one will run and run!



Once bitten! It's time to scout around the island. This reveals some major population centres. Maybe somewhere a little smaller would be a better target?

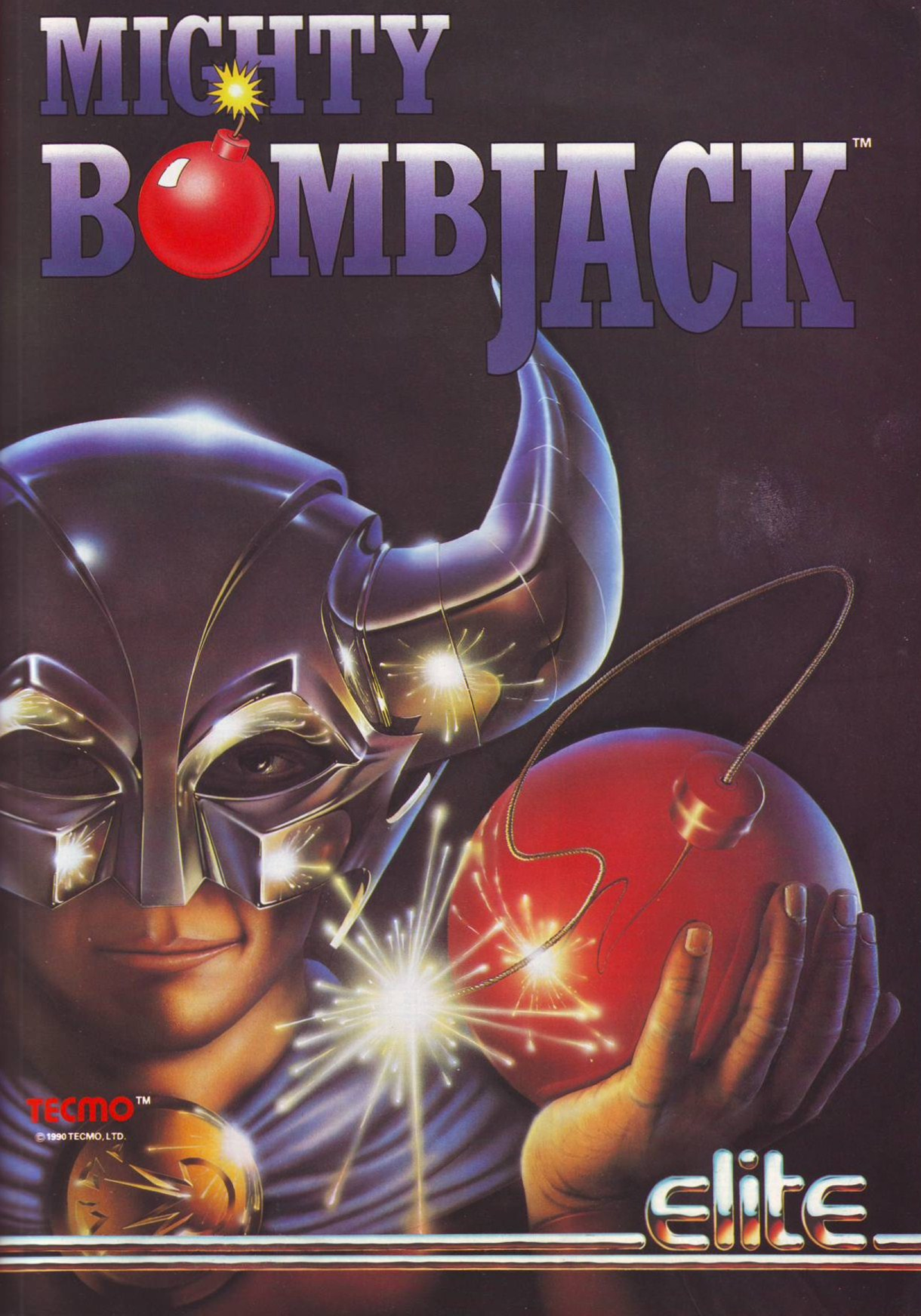


The battle backfires and the scales of power tip against you. There were too many, but empire builders must gamble to win power.



Your Powermonger goes down and the last thing he gets to see is the defeat screen. Oh how the mighty fall!




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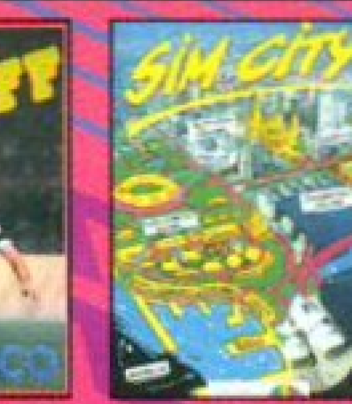
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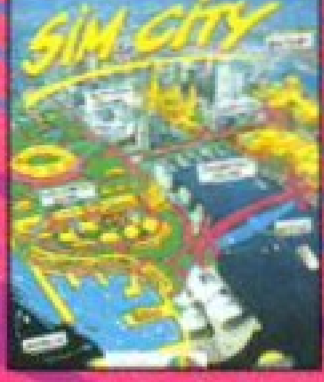
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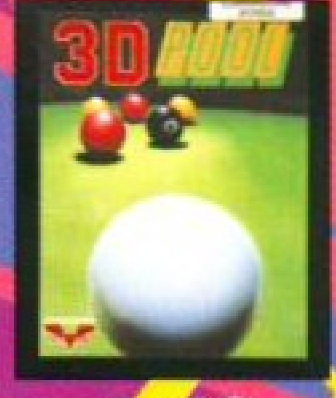
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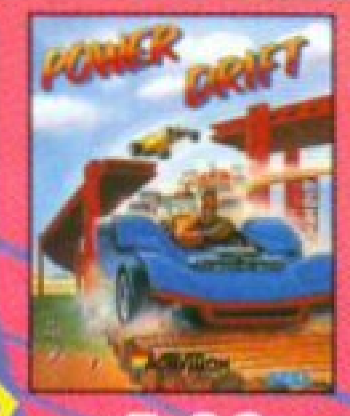
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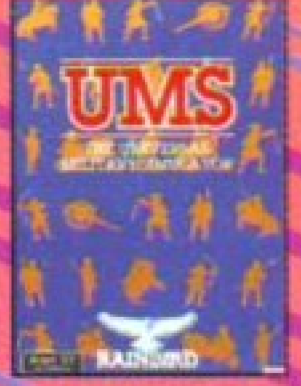
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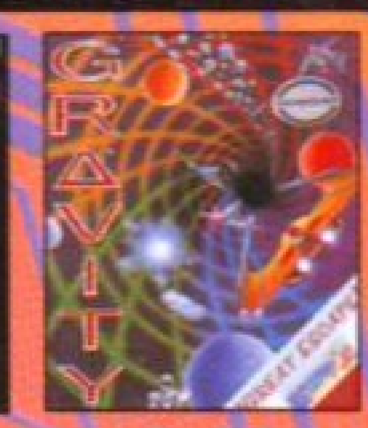
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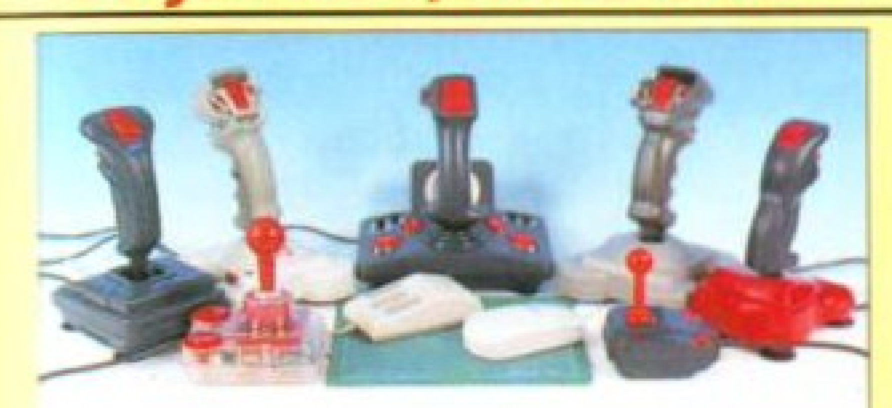
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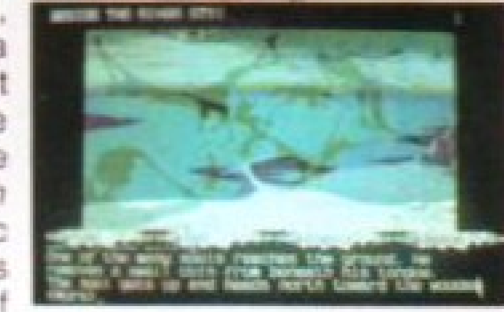


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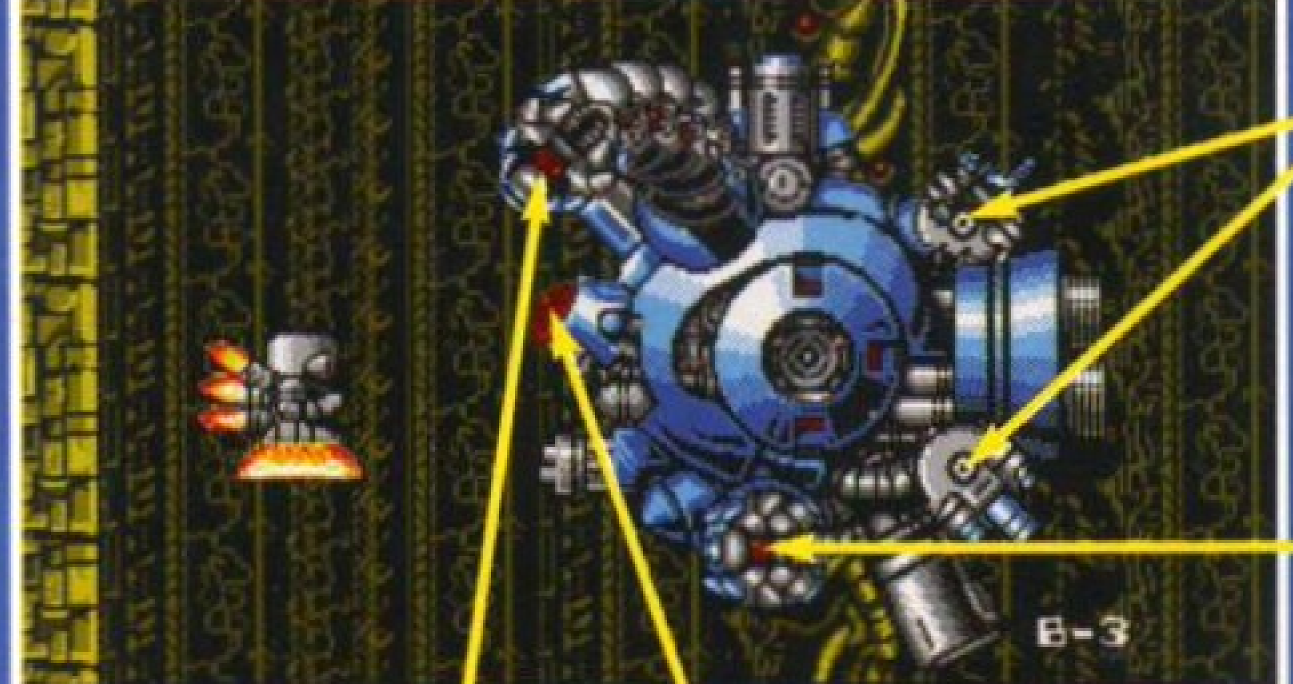
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KILLING THE GUARDIAN.
This end-of-level mother will home in on you relentlessly, until one of you gets trashed. You'll need to lure it from side to side of the cell, swinging round behind it to open fire.

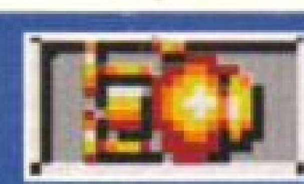


These dangerous laser-gun turrets must both be destroyed. Once they're taken out, things become easier.

The red spots are other prime targets. Repeated strikes will damage the machine severely.

At all costs avoid this swinging arm. It's fast, and if it hits you, you'll be instantly smashed into your constituent molecules.

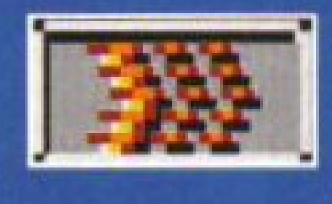
Once the laser turrets are destroyed, the machine's weakest point will appear. It's this red dome-like target. Get enough shots in and the guardian dies.



Missile Bombs. These home in on approaching enemy bullets. It's a protective device and is probably the most useful collectable.



Three-way Sight-Beam. Blasts out deadly energy in three directions. Fast, long-ranged and powerful. Well worth getting hold of.



Balkan Laser. This creates an impenetrable wall of fire in front of the Kid. Handy for barging through waves of nasties.



Very Large and Dangerous Energy Beam. This vapourises any aliens which get anywhere near it. It's the best offensive weapon, and wastes baddies like there's no tomorrow.

ATOMIC ROBOKID

ACTIVISION £24.99 ■ Joystick or

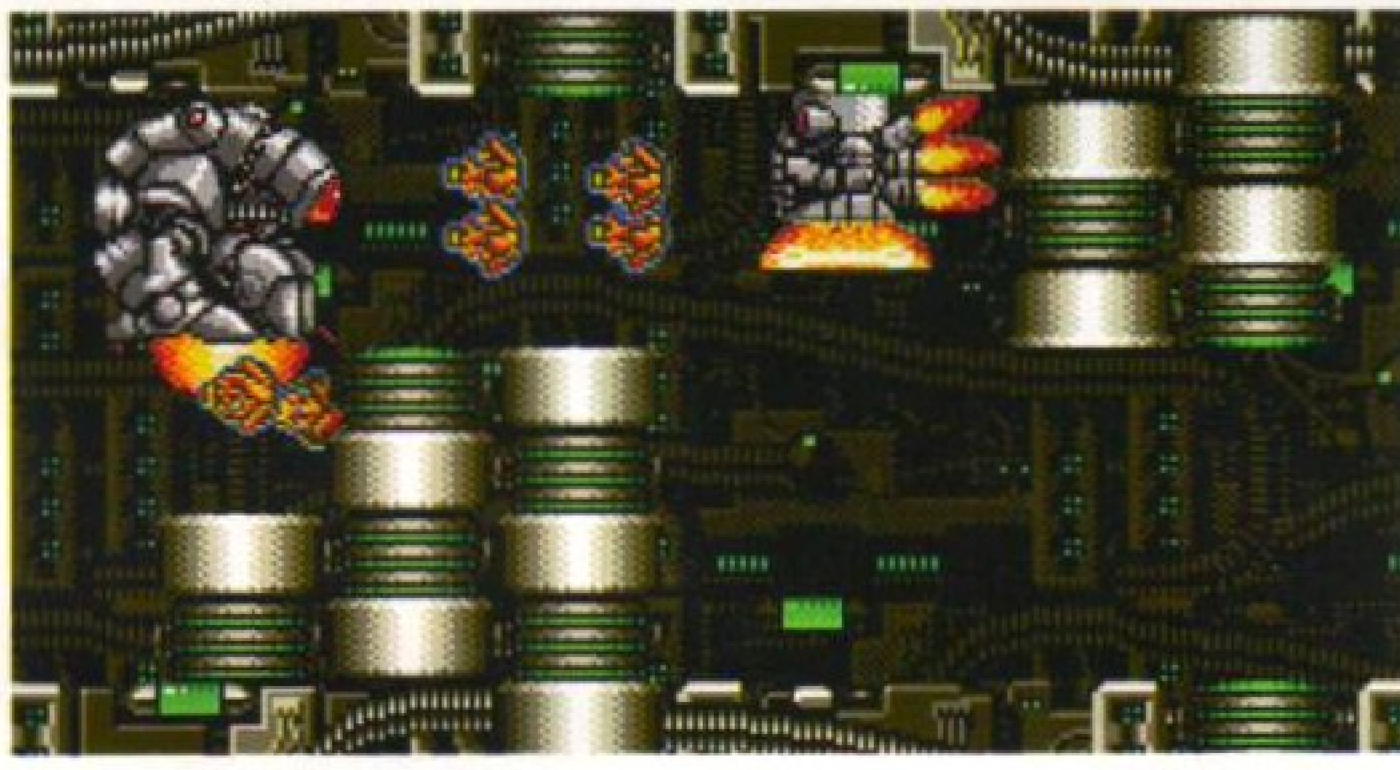
Forget the Detroit Cop. Here's the Kid. He's a cute, lovable steel-machine and his only purpose is destruction. It's what he was built for.

When he starts off, the Kid is completely useless. He can't fly, he's armed only with a small laser-blaster, and he's surrounded. Things do not look good. But walking around and hitting the gem-like objects, Kid can pick-up some impressive weapons and enhancements. Firstly, he gets the ability to fly. After that he can get five-way blasters, massively destructive energy beams, super-speed and so on. All these are collected as Kid moves along infested tunnels, looking for the exit to the next level.

Valid Target

The levels pulsate with grotesque alien life-forms and they are all valid targets. If the Kid touches an alien, he isn't harmed, but his progress is slowed down dramatically. Many, however, launch bombs at him, which drain his shields until he explodes.

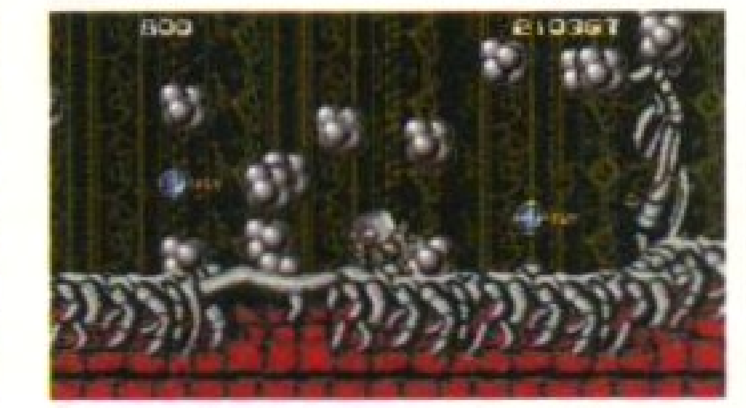
On the earlier levels, the aliens drift towards Robokid but later on he encounters static pods which fire almost continually and require planning to negotiate and a great deal of high-pressure blasting. There are 28 levels of this. The difficulty of each level varies. Some, near the beginning, are very hard. Others, further on, are easy-peasy.



There's a bit of a problem here. Occasionally minor guardians appear, blocking your route, pumping out huge numbers of bullets and are not easy to even get a decent shot at, never mind wipe them out. Here, you should duck behind the scenery and fire through it at the repulsive alien weirdo. He'll expire once he's taken enough of a thumping.



The three-way sight beam won't be very effective against this marauding chimney-sweep's brush. You must get past it and dive to the airlock on the right. This will deposit you safely into the next level.



At the beginning, you're just a worthless, pathetic dustbin. Jump and hit the fly icon. This gives you the speed you want and the mobility you need. Then it's time to get some weaponry and put a radical hurt on those aliens.

It is possible to access varying levels by choosing the different doors available to exit the level you've just completed. The discrepancies aren't altogether unwelcome. It's depressing to keep fighting further forward knowing what lies ahead is bound to be harder and bloodier.

Atomic Robokid is, undoubtedly, a straight forward shoot-em-up. Rattle the fire button, kill the aliens and blast your way through the various levels. It scrolls past merrily, offering more and more targets. And it's good enough to return to time after time.

Suicidal Sight-Seeing

The speed suffers when things get crowded, but this can work to your advantage, giving you valuable micro-seconds of reaction time. You'll need it. No one object moves particularly rapidly, but when enough of them are milling around, you can easily get overwhelmed.

The aliens and indeed the Kid himself are not very large, though. The actual playing area is fairly restricted, but there are some interesting backgrounds which float past. This detail adds a lot to the semi-organic atmosphere engendered by the game. There certainly is variety here, and it's possible to revisit earlier parts of the level you are currently negotiating. Ideal for suicidal sightseers.

Sound is fine. The noises are what you'd expect when murdering aliens, and the tune fits in well.

James Leach

VERDICT

- A dyed in the wool shoot-em-up, nothing less but nothing new.
- Not especially fast, but playable and addictive.
- Plenty of levels, all with high-quality graphics.
- Possesses a quality games of its genre need: addictiveness.
- There is a 'I-know-I-can-get-just-a-little-bit-further' feeling.



Magic Moments

When the going gets tough, the tough cheat. Each of the warriors can collect small pots of magic from midgets, who inhabit every level, by kicking them in the head. If Death=Adder's men start to get the upper hand then these pots can be used to call down some magical assistance. Each warrior has their own peculiar blend of conjured napalm.



Tyris Flare - She has the hottest magic in town, quite literally, they start off as pools of flame and range from fire demons right up to a blast of flame from an enormous red dragon and is used to kill tough guardians.



Gilius Thunderhead - He can call lightning down from the heavens to help him out. The effect ranges from a jolt to total electrocution.



Ax=Battler - His potions cause explosions. They range from small 'pops' to full blown 'nukes' depending on the number of potions he has collected.

GOLDEN

Virgin £24.99 ■ Joystick

Anyone who calls themselves Death=Adder just has to be looking for trouble! Which is just as well because there are three vengeance-crazed warriors on his trail. The tale of their little disagreement is told in *Golden Axe*, the brilliant hack-and-slash special hot from the arcades.

The plot is as basic as any blood-caked sprite slasher could wish for. Out of the three heroes you can choose two to fight their way across a horizontally-scrolling landscape in a bid to rescue a princess. Using a series of basic fighting moves they must overcome, by force of arms, the Armies of Death=Adder.



At the beginning of stage five Ax=Battler (the big guy with the sword) faces up to a dragon lady. Tyris Flare (the psycho girlie in the red bikini) calls down her fire dragon magic. This will kill any on-screen baddies and leave the dragon for our heroes to ride.

Different Strokes

The limited number of sword strokes (three) is supplemented with some sundry close-combat illustrations of kneeing, pummelling and throwing of enemies. *Golden Axe*'s charm however lies in the variety of ways, other than sword play, of dispatching the evil horde.

As the team leap over bridges and chasms the ordinary foot soldiers of Death=Adder throw themselves into the fray with amazing frequency. These kiddies are easily dispatched with blades but it's their friends, dragon riders and giants, who cause concern.

The lizard mounted cavalry are fun, their steeds come in three flavours: tail sweepers, flame breathers and fireball spitters. These monsters require riders to be dangerous and that's where the fun starts. If a rider is unseated in the heat of battle you can hop on and take control of the scaley tank – with the breath weapon included. It's a trick that carries the risk of getting toasted, but it can swing the battle decisively in your favour.

Gigantic Problems

Top of the Death=Adder nasty chart are the giants. Like the normal boys and girls you hack to bits (and indeed the three heroes) each one can take a set number of hits before dying. But, the larger they are the harder their weapons are. This means that one swipe from a giant's axe can result in central damage. What is more, like the double-decker buses their size reminds you of, they always seem to come in twos.

To balance out these rather chunky chaps Golden Axe sends midgets running at regular intervals. If you kick them in the head they proffer magic-potion bottles that become personalised smart bombs of apocalyptic proportions. Used at the right time even the heaviest foe can be sent into flickering oblivion without you even taking a scratch.

The most dangerous element of *Golden Axe* are the backgrounds. The heroes have to jump over the occasional gap in order to proceed. Yet the flawed, pseudo 3D makes jumping dangerous - as was the case in the arcade. There is a disconcertingly high chance of falling into oblivion, and losing one of your three lives, if you misjudge a leap and fall off or inbetween the scenery.

This is the one graphical black mark against a game which otherwise has a strong visual appeal.



Gilius Thunderhead (the mad-dwarven geek with the axe) and Tyris battle it out at the beginning of stage one. Tyris (who rides the dragon) had better watch out for the shoulder-charging guy (blue) and the very fast green goddess clone.

Is Death= Adder a Wimp?

The biggest chink in *Golden Axe's* armour is its staying power. The weakness lies in an unexpected area, normally it would fall down on the formula nature of plot and game design, but the mindlessly aggressive charm lasts surprisingly well. The problem is that the game is too easy. Anyone whose crossed swords with its arcade parent will have no trouble in polishing off the Amiga version – provided they can find a cooperative partner.

Golden Axe is identical in spirit to *Double Dragon*, with two heroes forced to fight as a team in order to overcome masses of bad guys. The strong graphics of the arcade have travelled well, as has the games spirit. Only the ease with which the game can be beaten and the annoying landscapes, hold *Golden Axe* back from the mantle of classic conversion.

Trenton Webb

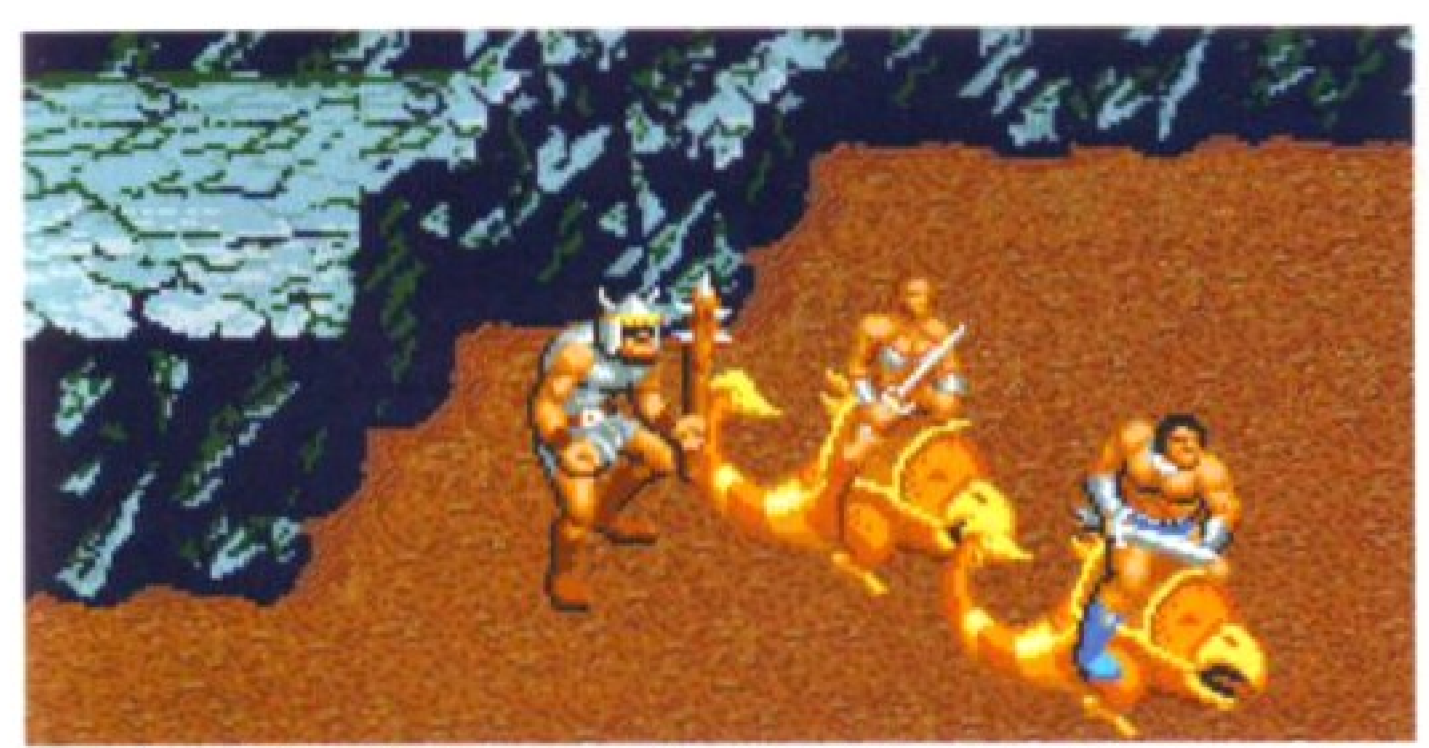


Get those midgets now! Kick the blue one in the head to get extra magic power and the green one for health points.



Gilius the dwarf fights on as Tyris (the lady in red) takes a hit. The large silver knight is extremely hard. Using magic is recommended as it's quicker and safer.

AXE



Ax and Tyris have both managed to get hold of tail-swiping dragons towards the end of stage one. Press fire and its tail takes the feet of any nearby foe.



The bad guys catch Ax=Battler (blue trunks) and Gilius (green everything and big axe) unaware. Luckily a dragon rider has been dismounted. Getting in the saddle may just save the day...



Gilius the dwarf is down for the count and Ax seems about to become dragon toast. Luckily both have a full quotient of magic as shown in the boxes above their heads, each blue dot represents a potion that has been collected.

Dragon Riding for Beginners



First find your dragon. Proceed to attack the rider, remembering to avoid their special forms of attack: tail swipe, flame jet or fire ball. One solid hit will dismount the rider.



After knocking the rider off, the dragon will crouch down. Stand over it and hey-presto you're aboard. You have to be quick though, they tend to run away!



Now you are in control of this fearsome beast remember but one hit will have you walking again, so be careful. To use the breath weapon or tail just press the fire button and 'Bosh' it's seriously-injured bad guy time.

VERDICT

- An amusingly fresh hack-and-slash romp.
- Large sprites and neat animation.
- Flawed scenery frequently proves irritatingly fatal.
- Much too easy in the two-player mode.
- Three heroes, two players and one solid arcade conversion.





Sirius 7 **features some of the weakest end-of-level guardians around. This ball-spitting skull can be bumped off with a few well-aimed shots to the eye, most of his defences can be stopped in their tracks. This is a definite let down, considering the incredibly dull previous level which involves few tactical decisions and much in the way of hackneyed, done-to-death alien sprites which are all a bit on the small side.**

SIRIUS 7

CRL £24.99 ■ Joystick

A computer terminal splutters into life, warning you that a remote colony is under attack. After leaping into your Acme space jalopy, you blast off, closely followed by three reserve craft flying under autopilot. Traversing the deep blackness of space, you head for *Sirius 7* and the unknown enemy. On arrival things look bleak. Droves of small-alien fighter craft pour out from the usurped colony, bearing down on your tiny spacecraft. Only your lightning-fast reactions can save you from certain death

Power Without a Point

Despite the weak and predictable plot, *Sirius 7* is a game that needs little or no underlying concept to make it work. Falling fairly and squarely into the "I'm a shoot-em-up, me!" category, it could just as easily have been you versus the 'Halibut-eating Megaliths from the brown side of Uranus' or some such irrelevant nonsense. As a player, you will be too busy concentrating on the blastability and speed than such fussy little details likethe plot.

And that, sadly, is where *Sirius 7* falls down. Yes, it is fast and yes, there is a high level of fire-power. But that's as far as it goes. *Sirius 7* lacks any kind of originality or taxing gameplay. Without either of these important features, fire-power and speed are lame attempts at creating the illusion of a superior game.



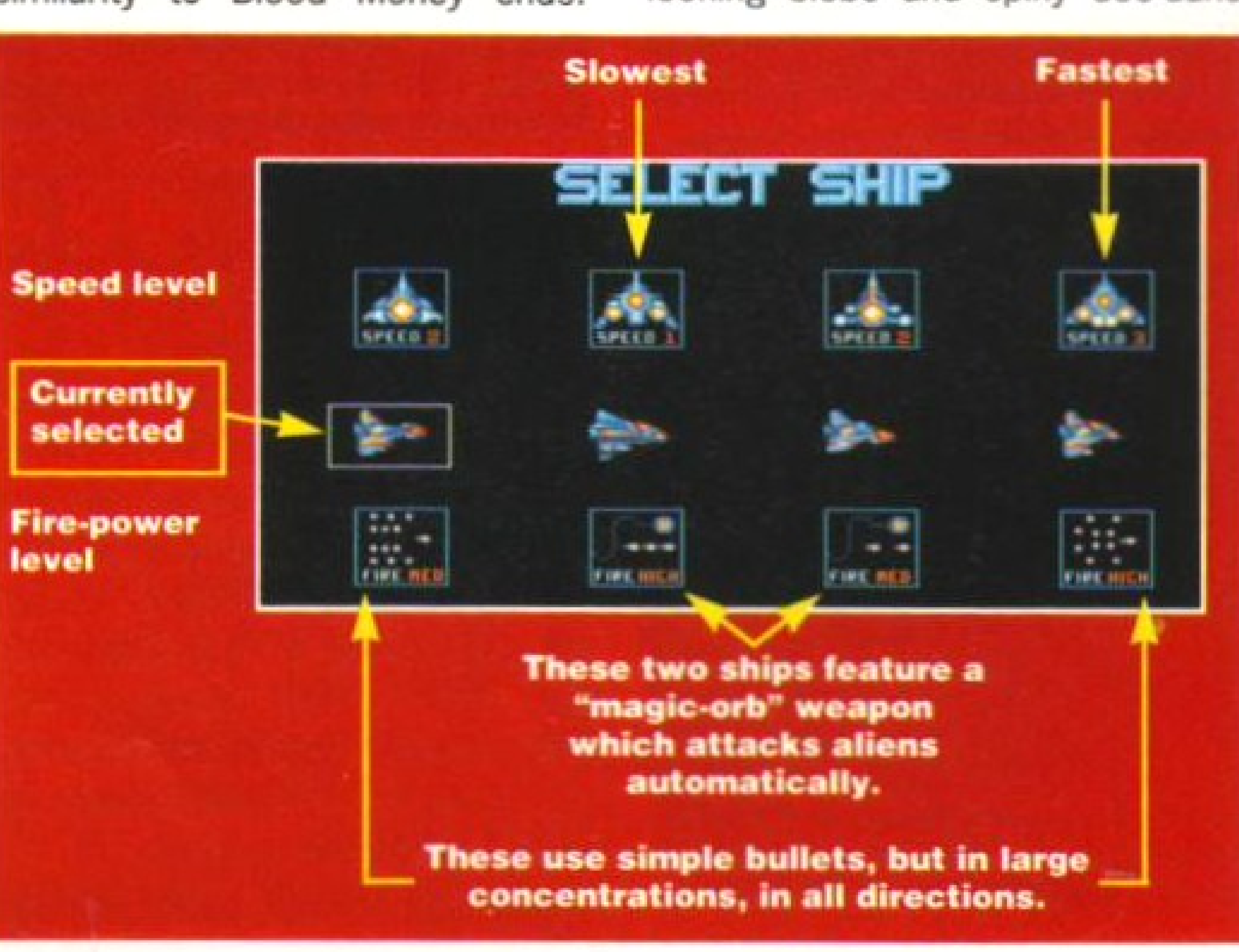
Oh No! It's the pathetic, round wobbly things ! Thanks guys make their appearance early on in this game. Just keep your fingers on the buttons and move up and down to machine-gun them out of existence.

Familiarity Breeds Contempt

The game begins with an impressive looking introductory sequence with a well chosen arcade tune, but it bears an uncanny resemblance to *Blood Money*. It features the prerequisite scrolling starfield, overlaid sprites and small scene-setting cameos, but it's a hollow echo of *Blood Money's* far superior effort. Once the actual game section has loaded, though, all the similarity to *Blood Money* ends. From then on it bears a similarly striking resemblance to *Denaris, Xynapse, Delta* and countless other shoot-em-ups, but minus the required gameplay.

What *Sirius 7* lacks in gameplay and plot, it also lacks in graphics. The sprites throughout the game bear yet another striking resemblance to another great shoot-em-up, *Xenon II*. Is it really that difficult to be original? Small (and believe me they're small) tinny-looking blobs and spiky doo-dahs pour onto the screen from the right-hand side, dump a couple or three badly-aimed red blobs and wibble around on screen until you bosh them, or they reach the left-hand edge. Keeping your finger firmly on the fire button is the best way to deal with them, preferably whilst waggling the joystick around in a reasonably random manner.

The better looking end-of-level guardians (golly, that's a new and exciting idea!) are child's play to reach, provided you can tolerate extreme levels of tedium on the way. And when you're there, these supposedly powerful and dangerous creatures can be popped off with a few straightforward wallops.



All Tack and Tech

Technically *Sirius 7* fulfils the main requirement of a scrolling shoot-em-up: it scrolls, and it shoots. The mechanics of the game's system are competent enough, but the actual game is poor to the extreme. Things like collision-detection do work reasonably well and the scroll-speed is nice and fast. It's just the drudgery of endless, repetitive alien-bashing that spoils a potentially-good game. There's absolutely no variation, no collectables, no exciting, "Cor, I didn't see him coming"-type baddies or anything remotely new or interesting.

The clear, crisp sounds are a welcome visitor. But only for the first 356 hearings. After that, you begin to tire quickly of the same throaty, thud-thudding of the ship's machine-gun and there's little else to bring redemption for this unappealing travesty of a shoot-em-up.

Neil Jackson

VERDICT

- *Sirius 7* is the equivalent of soma with all the good bits missing!
- Underwhelming gameplay, poor graphics and boring sound.
- Loads of bullets, bangs and blips but no real action.
- You'd get more action using your favourite art package!
- You have been warned.



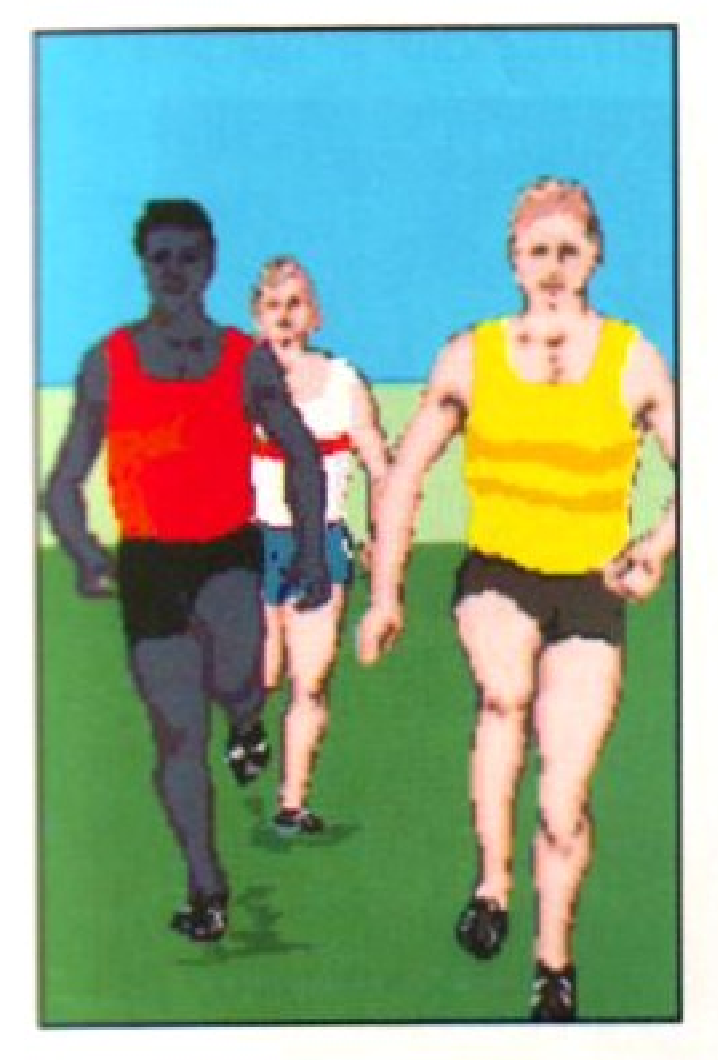


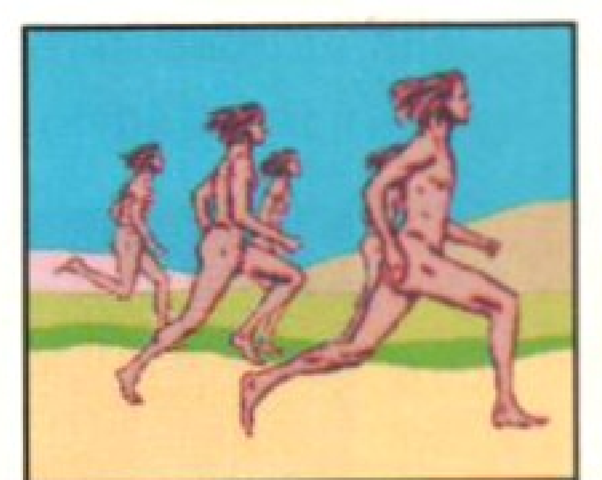
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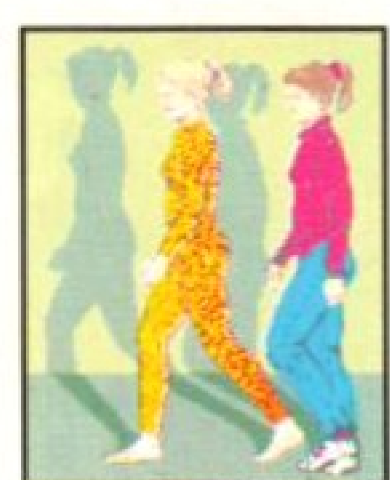
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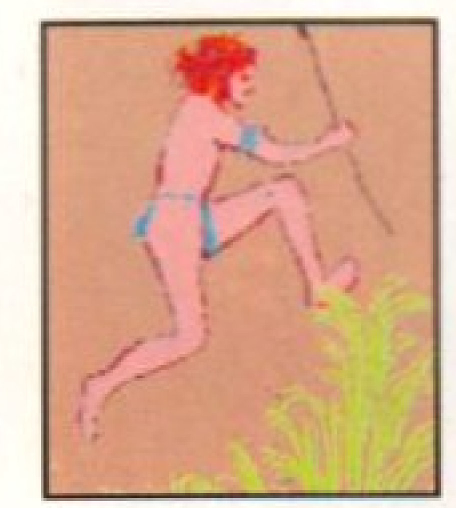


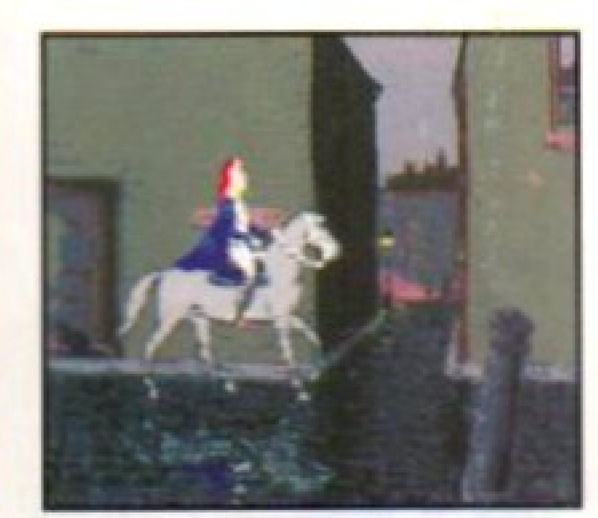














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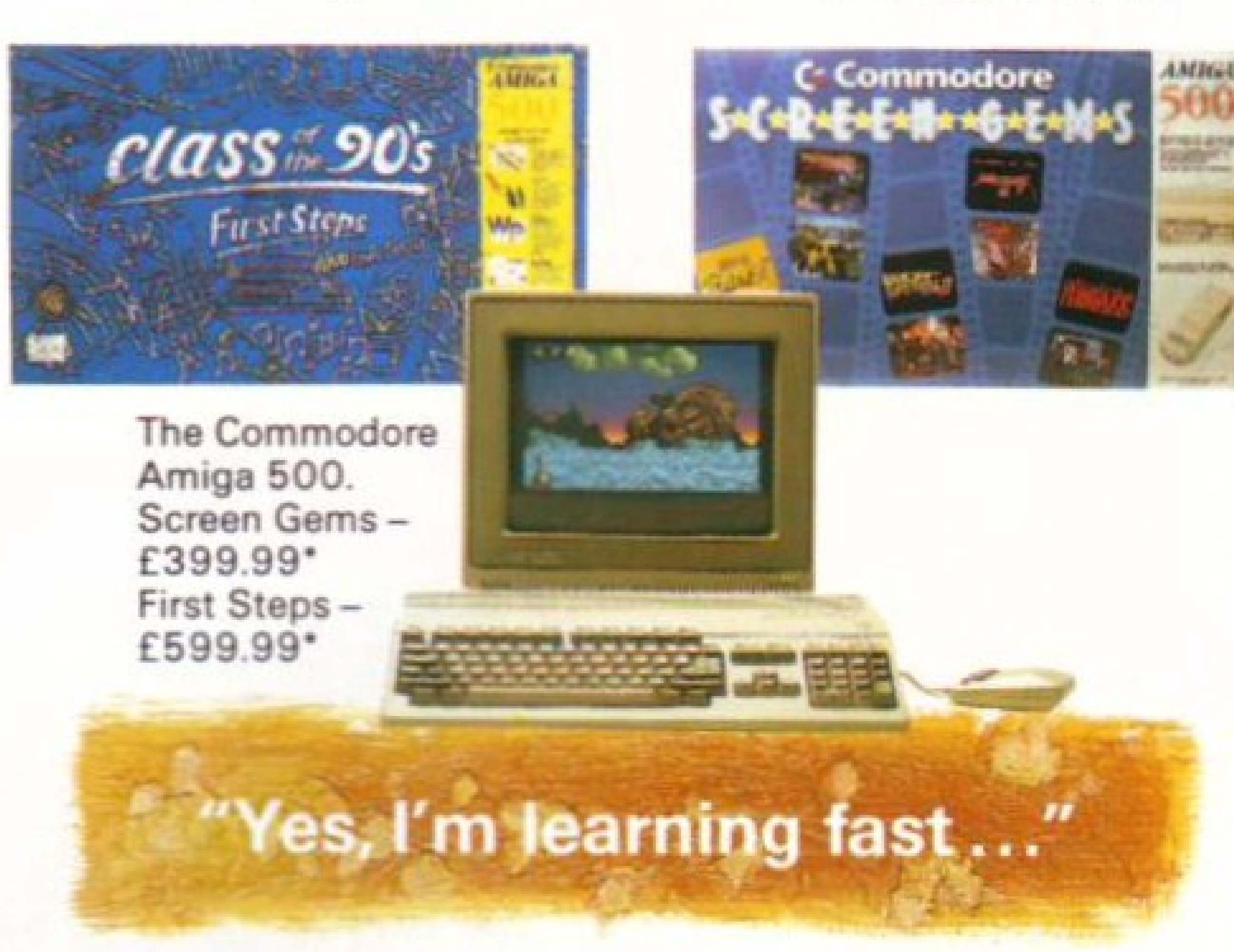
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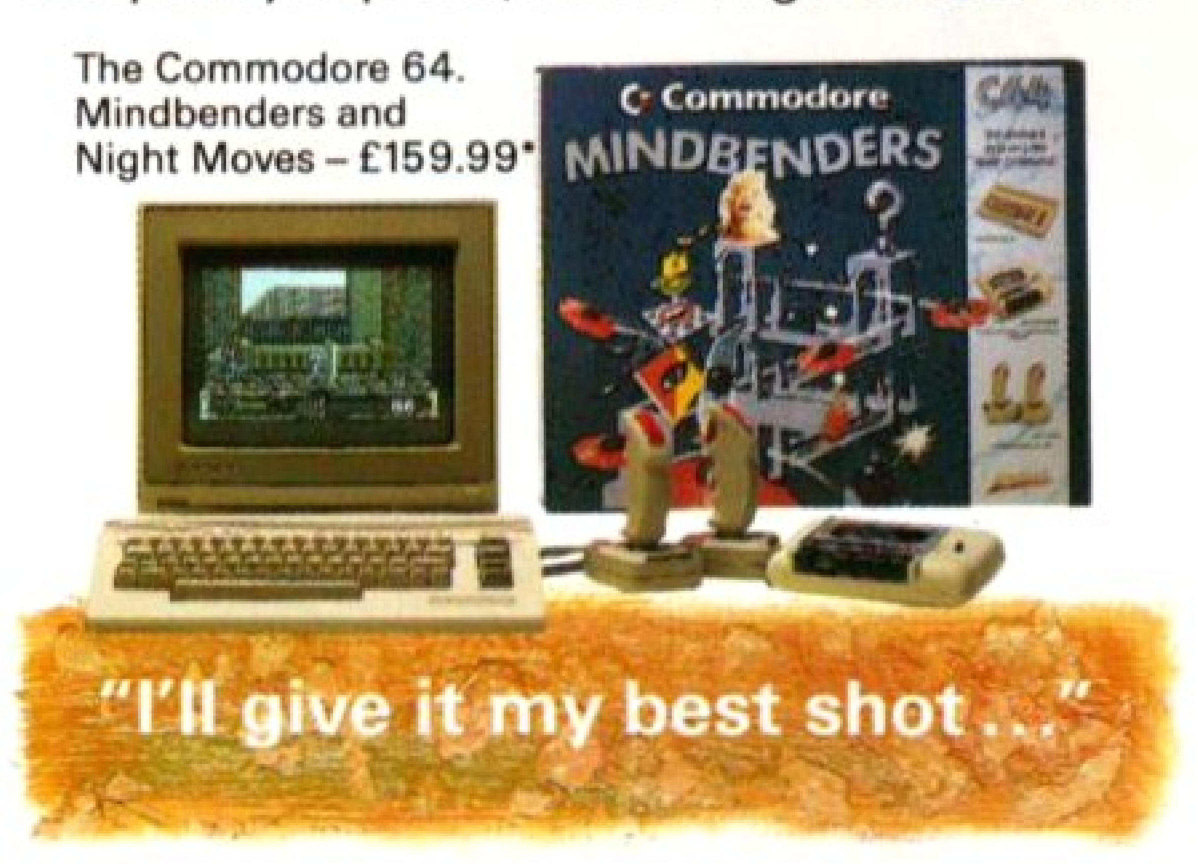


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The dragon rider takes a break and leaps off his mount to collect a power-up. This one has turned the dragon from a wimpy green into a mighty shade of gold. When standing alone the rider gets much greater firepower (three way shots). To jump off all he has to do is land the dragon next to a platform. To recall his scaly war horse, pull down on the joystick and the dragon returns to scoop him to safety. Meanwhile the dragon floats above his master protecting him from shots from above. He automatically follows the rider.

DRAGON BREED

Activision £24.99 ■ Joystick

Space ships? Thing of the past! A new breed of shoot-em-up has risen and at the arcade forefront is *Dragon Breed.* Coming from IREM Corporation – those nice people who bought us *R-Types I* and *II* – it has a massively violent pedigree featuring more power-ups than you can eat and huge, flying-lizard graphics.

The game stars an everyday prince and his pet dragon. The creature is impressive, well animated and smooth moving. They are the last of the Dragon Breed, fighting for survival in a horizontally-scrolling battle over six levels. The dragon is invulnerable to all attacks and only the rider can be killed. Careful positioning of the dragon means that the tail can be used to either destroy enemies or protect the rider. As an extra complication the prince can leap-off his mount and climb the scenery collecting power-ups for his scaly friend.

How Green is my Dragon?

The dragon at the start is your average, ho-hum, run-of-the-mill, green dragon that spits fire while the rider shoots single shots. All along the way, though, are magic potions, which change the dragon's colour and give him greater powers. Collecting the right power-ups to defeat the right aliens becomes a task crucial to the success of any Dragon Breeding venture.

Each level features a different graphic theme and sports its own peculiar hazards. The aliens come at you in reasonably vicious waves and threaten to overwhelm you on every level, even though they are easily killed. It's positioning and timing that will see you through rather than firepower. Like *R-Type*, this is a shoot-em-up that can be progressively learnt and beaten.

The above factors all bode well for this dragon bash. There are, however, enough demerits to keep *Dragon Breed* relegated to the shoot-out second division. The levels are too short, a factor that is only offset on three of the six levels by reasonably tough guardians. The other three – especially the final boss – are wimps. The game design too, appears flawed in certain areas with blatantly obvious safe spots. As for design faults, the blame for them lies with IREM.

Deadly, but Safe

The safe spots problem is highlighted by the occasional detection hiccup. Particularly on the second level, creatures have been specifically placed to make an apparent safe-spot deadly, but then it turns out they don't do you any damage.

Dragon Breed is a good conversion, duplicating the feel of the arcade original. Certain levels are prettier and harder than others. The guardians vary, resulting in the game switching from heart-stopping action to mind-numbing boredom. ***Trenton Webb***

VERDICT

- Faithful conversion of a complex coin-op.
- Well animated dragons and strong in-game music.
- Poorly judged difficulty settings, resulting in patchy levels.
- Only three of the six guardians are worth killing.
- Diverting, but not riveting, blast action.



A BREED APART:

As the mighty lizard goes through the game he changes colour thanks to power-up pick-me-ups. Each of the five coloured dragons have a different speciality which must be employed at some point in the game.

GOLD – By flicking up and then quickly down the tail forms a circle around the rider protecting him completely. It can be used to bash through heavily packed areas. For good measure, as the tail flicks, the dragon throws out a hail of death stars.

SILVER – This liz' fires guided magic bolts that seek and destroy the nearest enemies.



GREEN – Only spits single shots. As with all the other dragons if the fire button is held down then these are saved up into one big mega-blast.



BLUE – This dragon has two powers. From its underside fall a hail of deadly blue bolts. The more blues the more bolts. The dragon can also form a circle beneath the rider. The tail can then be used to kill enemies by collision.



RED – Holding the fire button sends a tongue of fire licking ahead of the dragon. As more reds are collected the length of the flame grows.

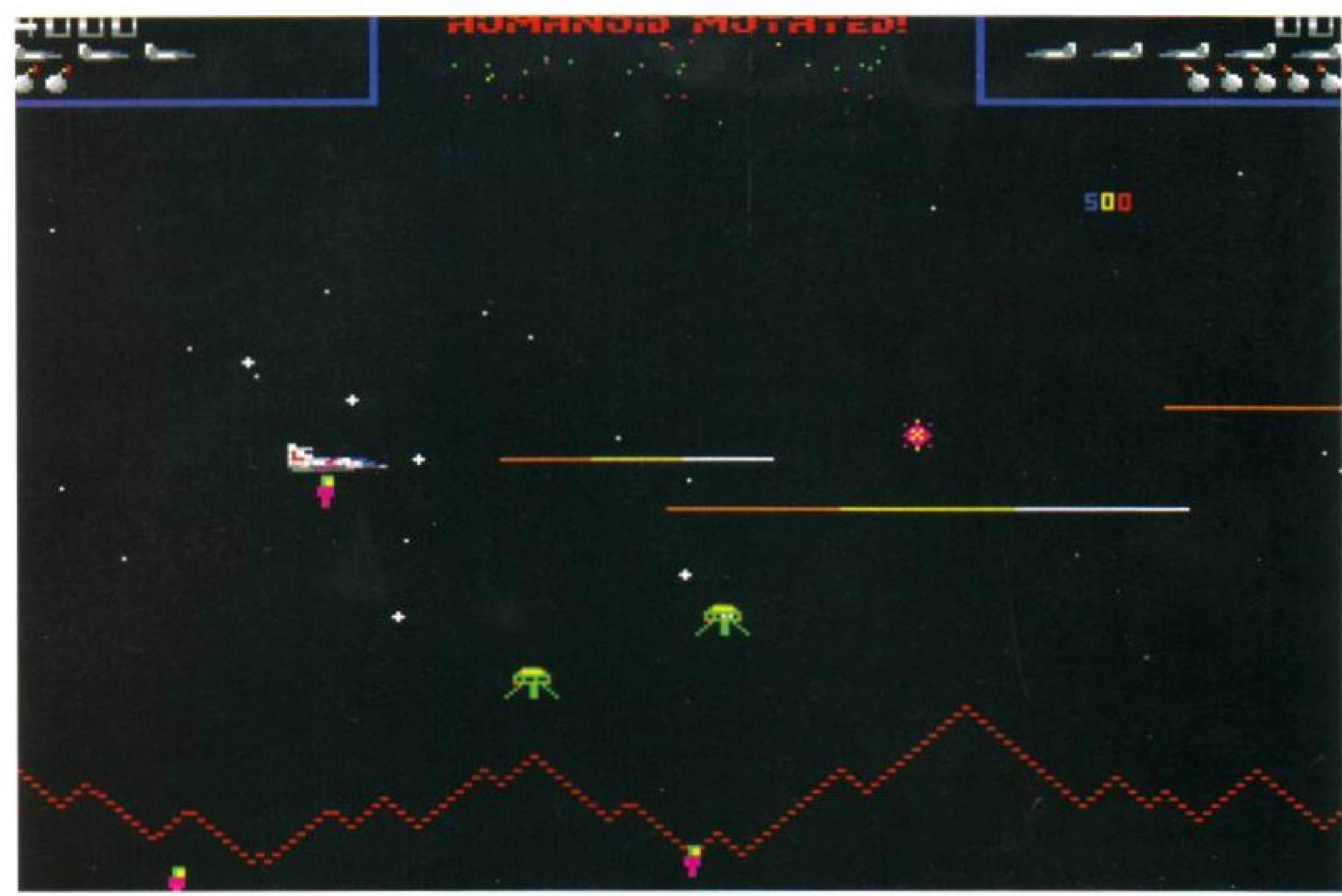


In 1983 thoroughly sensible kids were stealing and begging in order to play *Defender*. It was a plague. The addictive and explosive qualities of this otherwise harmless piece of silicon trickery hooked a generation.

OK, so we're getting into nostalgia kicks here, but what the heck. The hours we spent hanging on to those machines, with bubble-eyed manic expressions, merits more than just a flippant mention.

It all got a bit crazy. There were young men who had refined the skill of popping a two-pence piece up the coin-reject slot and thus clocking up five free credits. They had lots and lots of friends.

Anyone who faced the 17th wave of landers, mutants, bombers and pods, without smart bombing, would be describing the ordeal later – at great length and in the most horrific detail. Seven years later this icon of 1980s ultra-violence has made it onto the Amiga.



Definately not state of the art, but who cares? Arc have gone back to the basics of mad violence and ultra-death with a merry band of dim-witted aliens whose only function is to be wasted. It's excellent...

DEFENDER II

Arc Software ■ £19.99 Mouse and keyboard

Amphetamine crazy

Software purists can bog off right now. We're not going to be talking about smooth scrolling, highly-defined sprites or interactive qualities. We're talking about class. The original cyberspace in a box, right there in your local fish and chip emporium.

Arc's effort is a triumvirate of three *Defender* games. There's the sacred and utterly unassailable original, there's the amphetamine and sometimes bizarre follow-up, and there's a curious halfway house in the shape of *Stargate*.

Arc has called the package *Defender II*, but one has the feeling it will be the original which gamers will find irresistible.

It's true that home computer users were being offered *Defender* clones when the Amiga was just a pipe dream. But no publisher has had the bottle to claim they could reproduce the real thing. Naturally Arc have failed, but this is to do with the impossibly high standards set by the original than any programming shortcomings. If they had succeeded I'm sure it would have broken the hearts of those of us who thought we'd experienced something special.

Suckers

OK, so what's it all about? Basically you get to cruise above a sideways view of the planet surface shooting baddies. On the ground are ten helpless and very stupid pods. The bread-and-butter of your enemy force are landers which dip down, pick up the pods, fly up and then transmute into very nasty mutants. Remember that landers are pussy-cats, but mutants are horrible suckers through and through.

Protect your pods at all costs. If all ten are wasted either by your careless shooting, or by zealous landers, the whole world turns inside out. All the baddies become about twenty times worse than they were, and you are looking at an untimely demise.

At the end of every four stages you'll get a new stock of pods. You'll need them.

You also get extra points for the amount of pods surviving at the end of each stage, but this is unimportant. Clocking up high scores is nice enough, but you'll soon forget about these cosmetics in a furious vendetta against all aliens. Points are merely a means to get extra life and extra smart bombs. Smart bombs kill everything on your screen and, tactically speaking, the use of these gadgets set apart the cadets from the captains.

As you'd expect it's harder the further into the game you go. Apart from landers and mutants there are bombers, swarmers, betas and Lord knows what else.

Seven year glitch

Arc have wisely decided not to add too many 'improvements' to any of the originals, and the only major changes are in the sound department. This is not wholly unwelcome. While that menacing growl at the start has now gone, there are new warning sirens when your pods are being picked up.

They have screwed up a bit by putting some aliens in the fray too early, but it would be pedantic to go through all the little glitches. Graphically, it's faithful to the original. Pre-battle screens are a mishmash of psychedelic fun and enthusiastic tricks, and it's pleasing that the programmers got creativity out of their systems before embarking on the actual game.

A major quibble is the control method. Thrust, positioning and reverse are mouse controlled, while fire and smart bombs are controlled at the keyboard. This takes more than a little getting used to. ***Colin Campbell***



- **If you love the original buy this game.**
- **It may be old, it may not be pretty, but it is fantastically addictive.**
- **Appaling keyboard layout.**
- **Almost too fast to play.**
- **'70s nostalgia freaks, get it on!**





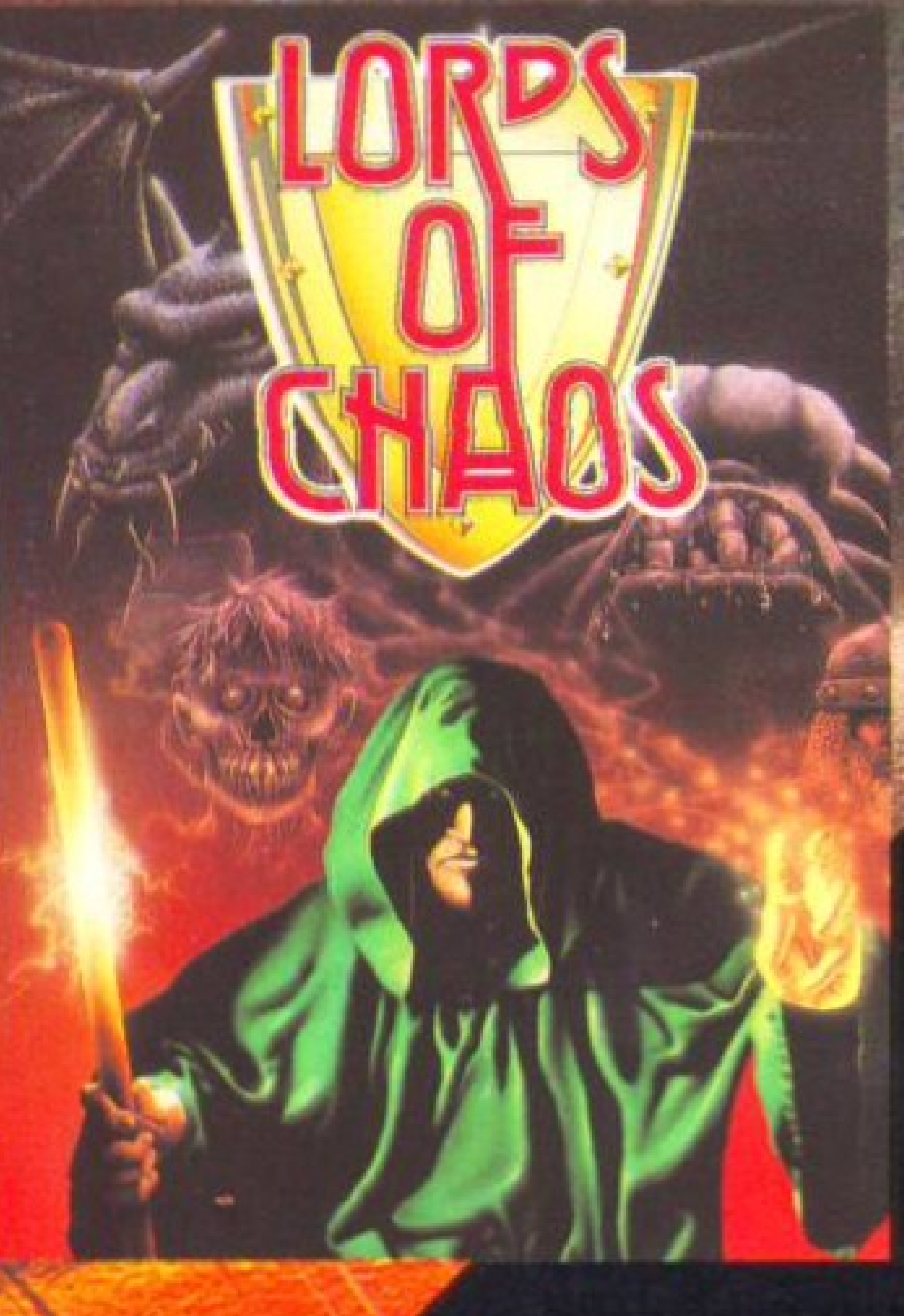
Stargate: almost the same as Defender, except for windows to escape through. These can land you right in another scrap.



Defll: Fast and pretty with more dangerous aliens, but it can't set itself apart from other side-ways-scrolling shoot-em-ups.


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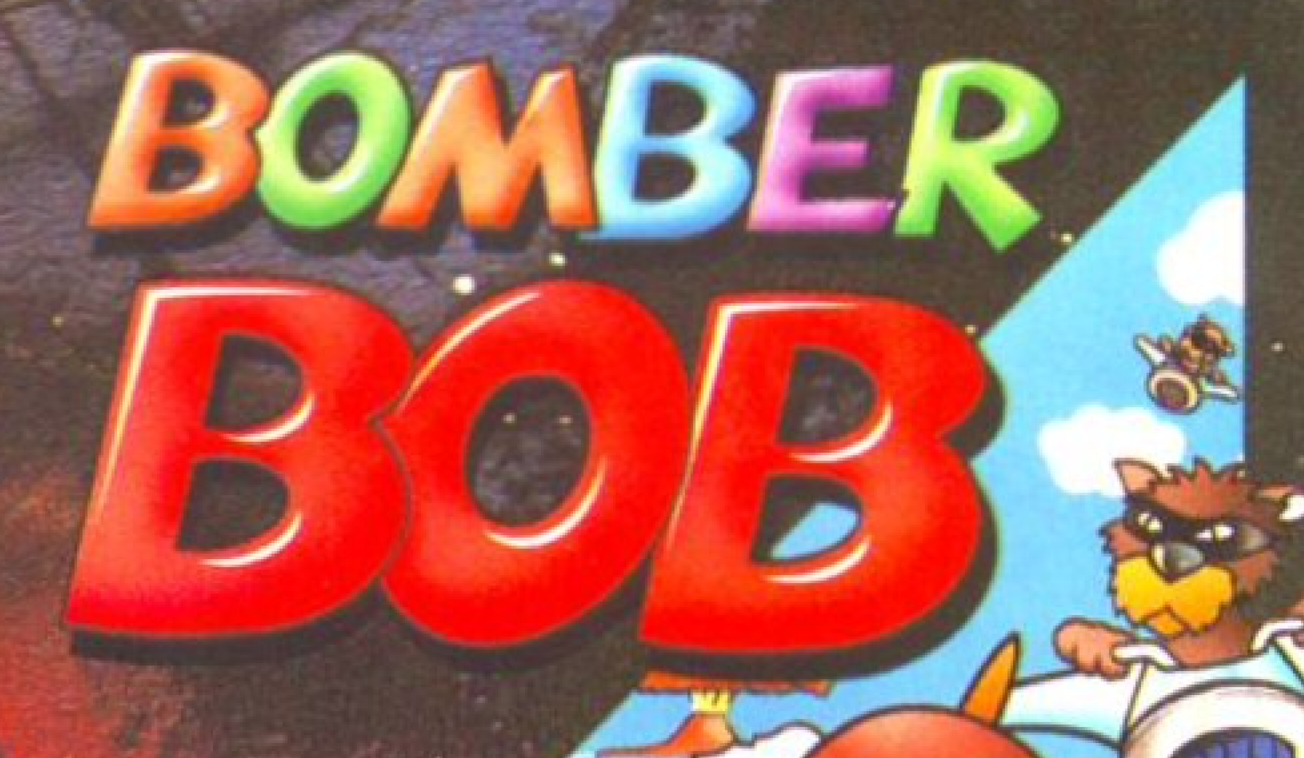
Produced by the designers of Laser Squad, Mythos Games have packed excitement and strategy into a game bursting with features: 1 - 4 players can battle against each other or highly intelligent computer opponents, make potions, cast up to 45 different spells, collect treasure and fight mystical creatures in this multi-level adventure.

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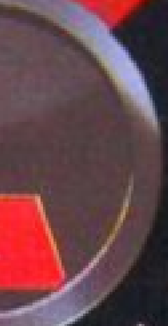
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90% Joystick "Megastar", Amiga Kickstart "1" rated, 90% Amiga Joker - these are just some of the accolades Ziriax has received so far.

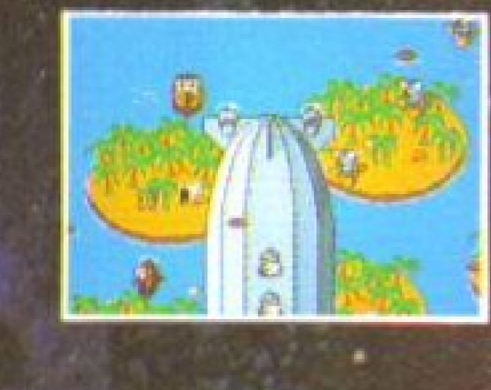
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(Zero Sep. 1990)
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It's a cats life. Getting beaten, biffed and booted wherever you may roam. But you've got more important things to worry about than your own health and safety. Your favourite-feline female has been captured by a bunch of evil scientists, who are going to perform lots of nasty animal experiments, then scoop out her scull and turn it into an ash - tray.

So it's up to you to rescue the unfortunate pusskins. That involves making your way through four levels - comprising of hundreds of screens - of tortuous arcade action, filled with all manner of creatures determined to deter you in your all important task.

Biffing a bat. Your ball of wool stuns your adversaries for a short time. The wool is your only real form of defense - you cannot actually kill your enimies. Contact with them drains away valuable life force. Other ways you can be harmed are by falling too far, and impaling yourself on a spike. It's a good thing you have nine lives really, they disapear at rather an alarming rate.

NINE LIVES

ARC £24.99 ■ Joystick



The creatures that inhabit the game come in many different varieties. There are plenty of pick-ups, which range from useless, to just plain silly. There's a captive cat in the top left corner of the screen. It's up to you to rescue it, you've just got to work out how to get there.

Big and bold

It's a cutie platform game, and features some of the biggest, boldest cartoon graphics this side of Warner Bros. studios. Everything is handled with a comic air. Virtually every action has an amusing graphical sequence. Picking up a pack of cigarettes starts you smoking. Collecting a pair of wings turns your tail into rotor blades, giving you the power of flight.

There are plenty of pick-ups to help you. There are a minority of harmful ones though, so be careful.

Jumping is achieved by holding down the joystick. The longer you hold it down for before letting go, the more powerful it is and the further you leap.

Death in *Nine Lives* comes in many different ways. Falling too far is fatal, as is walking or jumping onto a set of spikes. Collision with a creature steadily eats away at your health, unfortunately you can't kill them, but you can stun them for a short time, which is a help as they are then unable to do any harm to you .

Dead 'Ard

The one gripe, and unfortunately it's a major one, is that the game is frustratingly difficult. It's not even worth bothering to avoid collision with the other creatures that inhabit the strange world in which the game is based. You know that you'll crash straight into them anyway. It's best to simply try and spend as little time in contact with them as you can, and jumping to the relative safety of a nasty-free platform.

But the act of jumping is laced with peril too. You've got to time it with perfect precision. The implementation of variable sized jumps is a nice idea, but in practice proves almost impossible. It's only by trial and error that the timing for a particular leap can be found. And by that time you have probably halved your quota of lives.

Great graphics are no substitute for gameplay. While you chuckle at the animations initially, they soon wear off. Sadly there isn't an awful lot left underneath.
Adam Waring



Curiosity killed the cat. *Nine Lives* is stuffed to the brim with amusing cartoon sequences. Oh well, another eight lives to go.

VERDICT

- *Nine Lives* is a big-tough alley cat of a game.
- Success is governed by luck, rather than skill.
- It's too hard! You need 18 not nine lives!
- The animation captures that *Tom and Jerry* feel.
- Inventive graphics have unfortunately come before good gameplay.





Oh dear, a badly-timed jump means certain doom. Death, along with everything else in *Nine Lives*, is treated comically. A cartoon style sequence has Bob stopping in mid-air, looking down, and swallowing, before waving goodbye, as he is here, and plumeting downwards.



He's such a cool cat. Bob stops for a fag break before continuing his important journey. Don't hang around too long though!



The hero of the day, Abi, goes in for the kill on a ghost, using only his knife. The villain disappears in a cloud of dust. Flying at the side of Abi is his conjured friend. This little guy helps out by killing monsters. The score panel at the bottom shows how much of each potion he has collected in the little bottles. A bigger and more accurate menu is available by pressing the space bar. This brings up the magic menu.

DEATH TRAP

ANCO £24.99 ■ Joystick or keyboard

Someone has finally built a better mouse trap. It's a trap so good, so deadly, that it doesn't restrict itself to rodents and does a neat sideline in people mashing too. The trap has been baited with magic scrolls that give the user unimaginable powers – if they live long enough that is.

Taking the form of a traditional horizontally-scrolly arcade adventure, *DT* is made different by the inclusion of *Dungeons and Dragons* style magic adding to the strategy and gives it a more flexible feel. The magic isn't preset, you have to make your own mistakes.

Starting out with nothing more than a trusty knife, you have to stab your way through hordes of giant frogs, bed-sheet ghosts and demented Egyptian wizards. Luckily, killing some of these boys earns you a portion of potion. There are three different coloured potions: red potion can be used to conjure magical weapons, green increases your spell capability and blue gives you healing powers.

But what, dressed as our silly-trousered hero, do you actually have to do, though? Well, there are five levels of dungeon in which Shankriya – the game's big nasty – has hidden five, stolen magic scrolls. Being a magician of great renown, he has devised a rather fiendish set of labyrinths filled to the brim with cunning traps to make retrieving the scrolls fatally difficult. Two of the more common traps – if not particularly cunning – are concrete slabs dropping from overhead and spikes that pop out of the floor.

Pope in the Woods

Is the game difficult? Are bears catholic? Does the Pope live in the woods? No, but that's beside the point because the only end-of-level guardian you'll see a for a while is the unattractive giant slug on the back of the box. *Death Trap* tests the mind and reflexes, as the same trap is triggered time after time.

The potions, though, are the key to the whole game and you must learn to distribute them wisely. A stab of the spacebar brings up a potion menu. From here the potions that have already been won can be used to give your poor player a much needed boost by casting a spell. A menu of the various concoctions is available, all you have to do is slide down to the one you want to cast. Then, providing you've enough of the relevant potion, the spell takes effect.

If you've more potion than is required for the basic spell you can pump-up its power by blowing more juice on it. This has the desirable effect of increasing the spells potential, but the present costs have to be balanced against future needs. If you don't make the most out of your potions, the end is nigh.

Among all the confusion it is easy to forget the tidy graphics



A sheet like spirit misses his attack on Abi (the baggy-trousered hero). There's no point in going back for him though as he won't be produce any potion.

that binds this game together. The sprites are well animated while the background is partly interactive. The scrolling is weak, at times tending to lag behind the player when he jumps or crawls. This is just slightly disorientating.

Unfortunately there is no music, apart from an atmospheric intro tune. Ostensibly the graphics and sound serve their purpose, making the game attractive without dominating gameplay, a fault which is common in other examples of the genre. ***Andy Ashwwin***

VERDICT

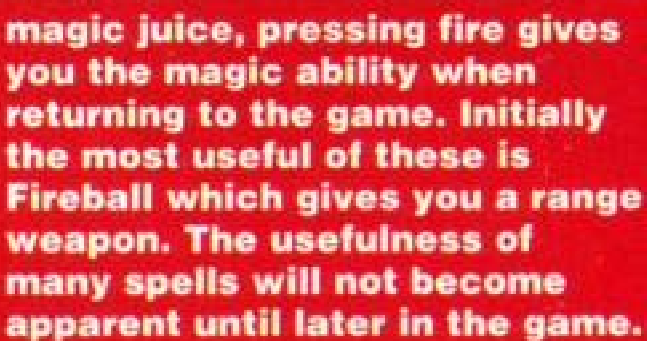
- It's no milestone, just rather good.
- Not impossible but dead, dead hard. Prepare to be frustrated.
- Good graphics and effects, but suffers from a lack of in-game music.
- Interesting twist with mix-and-match magic.
- The strategic use of magic adds tension and refreshes an old game formula.



Home brew potions and how to use them.



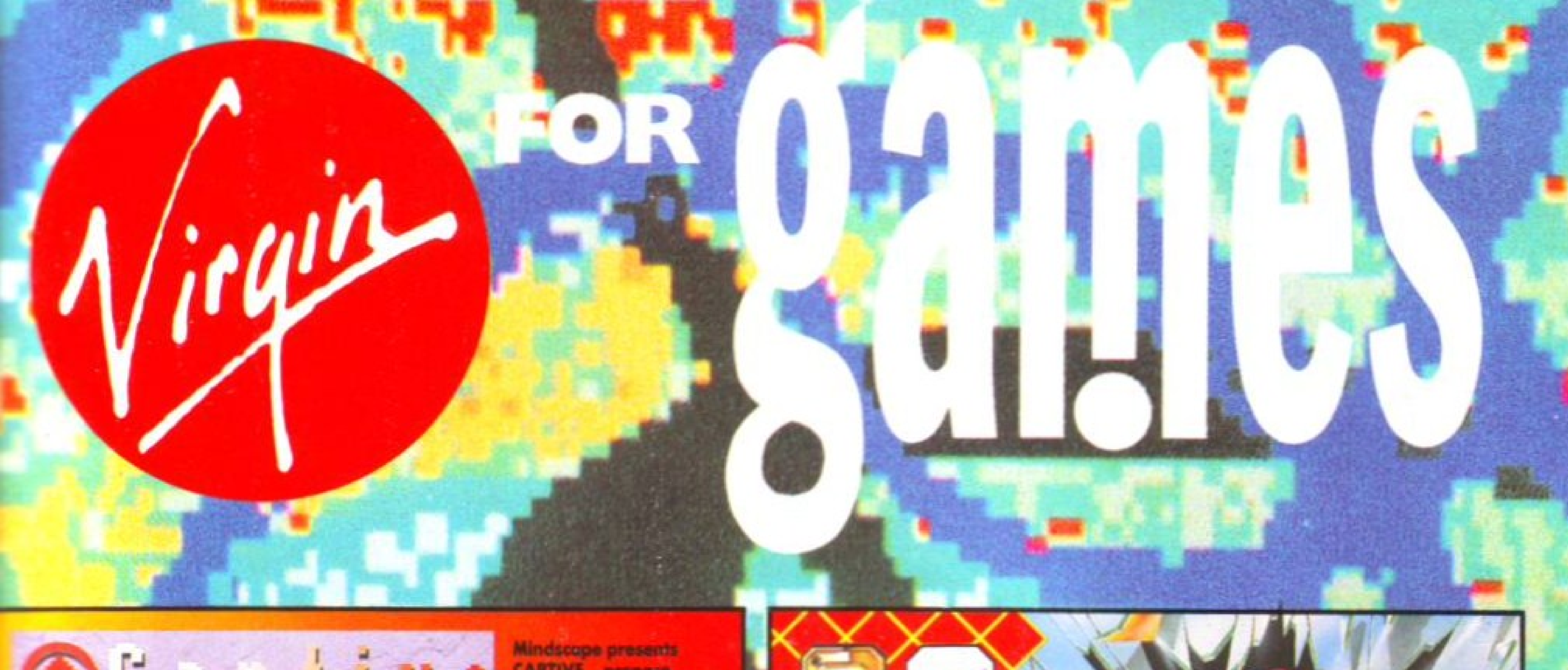
This is where you cast the spells in the Death Trap after selecting the menu by pressing the space bar. Then pull down on the stick to highlight the spells you want to cast. The cost of that spell, in potion, appears and if you have enough



magic juice, pressing fire gives you the magic ability when returning to the game. Initially the most useful of these is Fireball which gives you a range weapon. The usefulness of many spells will not become apparent until later in the game.



Abi goes potion collecting. The green flask will enhance his spell abilities, red his weapon potential and blue should allow the boy to cast healing spells on himself. Use them carefully but use them fully or you will not escape the Death Trap.



software

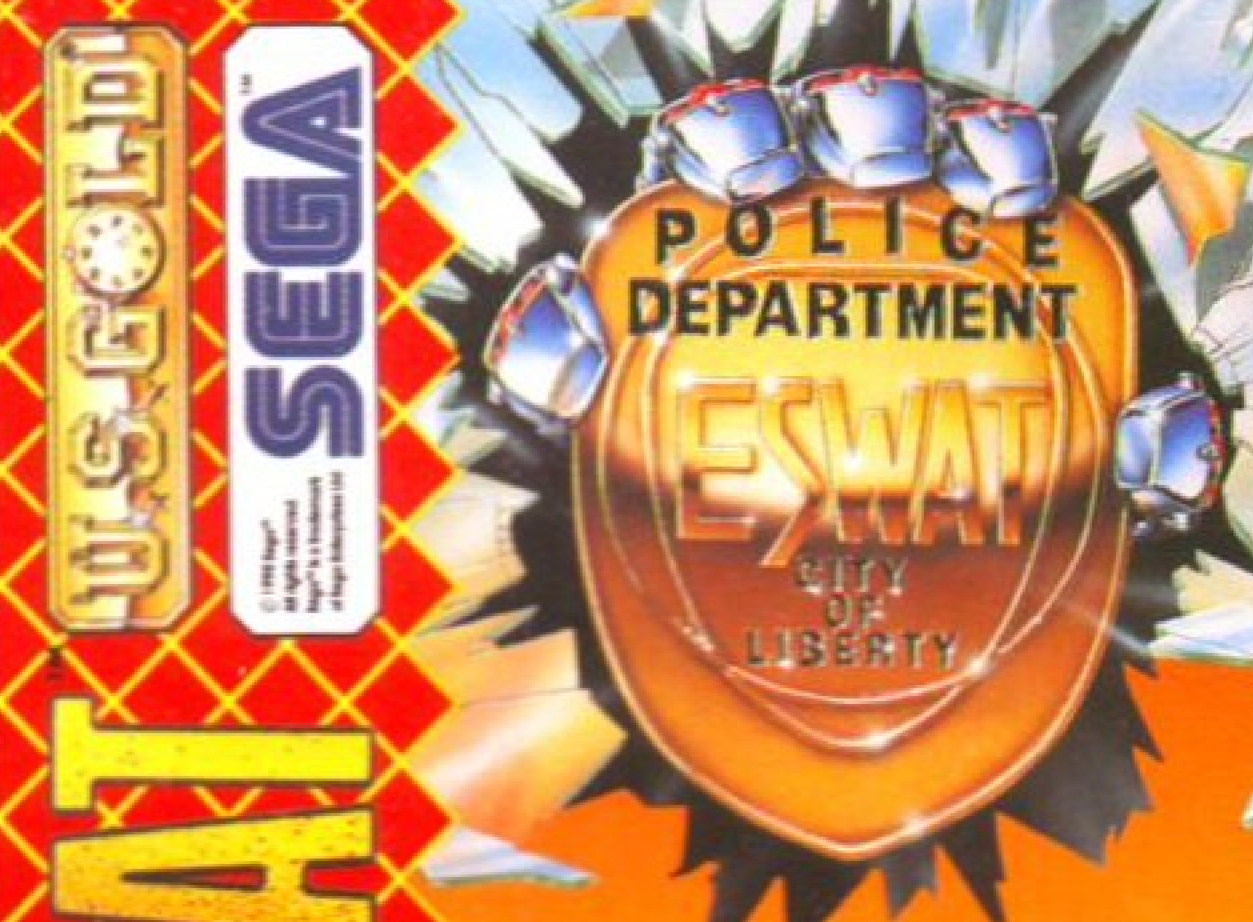




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MINDSCAPE
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Rogue goes on the hunt for his Bio-chip buddies. Gunnar, Helm and Bagman are all on these four levels somewhere. If he succeeds in his mission to find them, Rogue must then destroy the Nort base and make good his escape. To defend himself, all the GI has to begin with is his bare hands, but there is a knife and gun close at hand. Once he finds Gunnar of course, all his problems will be solved, and the other two silicon-based comrades also have particular uses in conquering this first and very difficult section.

ROGUE TROOPER

KRISALIS £24.99 ■ Joystick and keyboard

The first *Rogue Trooper* game from Piranha didn't really receive much acclaim, mainly due to the fact that the game hardly reflected the feel of the comic strip at all. However, Krisalis have managed to snap up the licence and have produced a game which perfectly recreates the struggle of the lone Genetic Infantryman in his struggles through the dangers of the Nu-Earth War.

You play the last GI after he has been captured and imprisoned in a Nort base. You have managed to break out of the cells and must find your Bio-Chip pals before escaping to continue your search for the Nort traitor who caused the slaughter of the rest of the GI division.

No Escape

The game begins in the passages of the Nort base as you search for Gunnar, Helm and Bagman. Once you have found them all, you must go on to blow the pressure seals in the fourth sector, poisoning the air in the base and thus killing the rest of the Nort guards. The presentation of these sections perfectly captures the feel of the original comic strip. The graphics have been well studied to make sure that the look is spot-on, from the Nort pressure-suits to the rather sick use of dead bodies!

Moving Target

Next up is a flying section, with Rogue escaping in a stolen ship as he continues his journey. Occasionally, the blue hero comes across a couple of scavengers named Bland and Brass, who can supply Rogue with extra equipment. The 3D

BIO-CHIP BUDDIES

Rogue is helped on his mission by his three Bio-Chip friends:



HELM: Coaxed into a Nort trap aboard a rescue shuttle, Helm was killed by a missile attack and now sits in Rogue's helmet.



GUNNAR: He was killed by a Nort Plasma-Sphere in the ambush and so Gunnar now resides in Rogue's rifle.



BAGMAN: Shot by a Kashar Drill-Probe, Bagman now sits in Rogue's backpack, ready and waiting to help his buddy.



Bland and Brass, scavengers extraordinaire, are on hand to help Rogue beef-up his stolen ship. Of course they don't do anything out of the kindness of their heart and will charge big bucks for improvements. Besides, would you buy a used spaceship from these men? The appearance of peripheral characters proves the game's authenticity.

Still on the first level Rogue has recaptured all his old buddies and is now looking for a way out. Here he is in the med-lab. Those bits of twitching corpse are actually useful though, so check them out. There's still the problem of the Nort guards to take care of, but they are easy meat for a fully-packed GI in a killing frenzy.

flight is effective, but everything seems a little to clean and metallic to be the desperate and war-ravaged world of Nu-Earth.

If Rogue can survive for long enough to reach the Souther base, he must then fight through the guards (who are trying to arrest him for desertion) and reach Souther Command and present the evidence of the traitor, who killed his fellow buddies, to the generals.

Blue Moon

It's nice to see that people are taking this much care over comic licences for a change. There haven't been that many cartoon superheroes appearing in quality computer games, which is a shame, but with *Batman, Spiderman* and now *Rogue Trooper* things are definitely beginning to look up! ***Maff Evans***

The GIs Blue

As the war on the planet Nu-Earth rages on, the Souther scientists have come up with a new force to battle the Nort troops - the Genetic Infantrymen.

These strange blue-skinned warriors were genetically created to be the optimum warriors, with tougher emotions, 20% improved strength and weapons skill plus total immunity to all chemical weapons, which makes it possible for them to safely walk around the surface of Nu-Earth with no pressure suit. Every GI is implanted with a Bio-Chip, which records their brainwaves at the point of death. The chip then can be implanted into a piece of GI equipment – as long as the operation is carried out within the minimum time limit of 60 seconds!

However, disaster befell the GI troop on their first mission. A traitor in the Souther HQ had given Nort troops the details of the GI drop, allowing the Norts to wipe out the entire team...except one. That GI is hunting for the traitor. He is Rogue Trooper.



After the breakout from the Nort base Rogue steals a space-shuttle and races to freedom. The flying is tough and dangerous, with the Norts holding the upper hand. A few good deals with Bland and Brass though, should soon see the errant GI on the road to victory as invisibility and extra shields can be added to the armoury. It all looks a bit to tidy though, for a world that has been ravaged by chemical warfare.

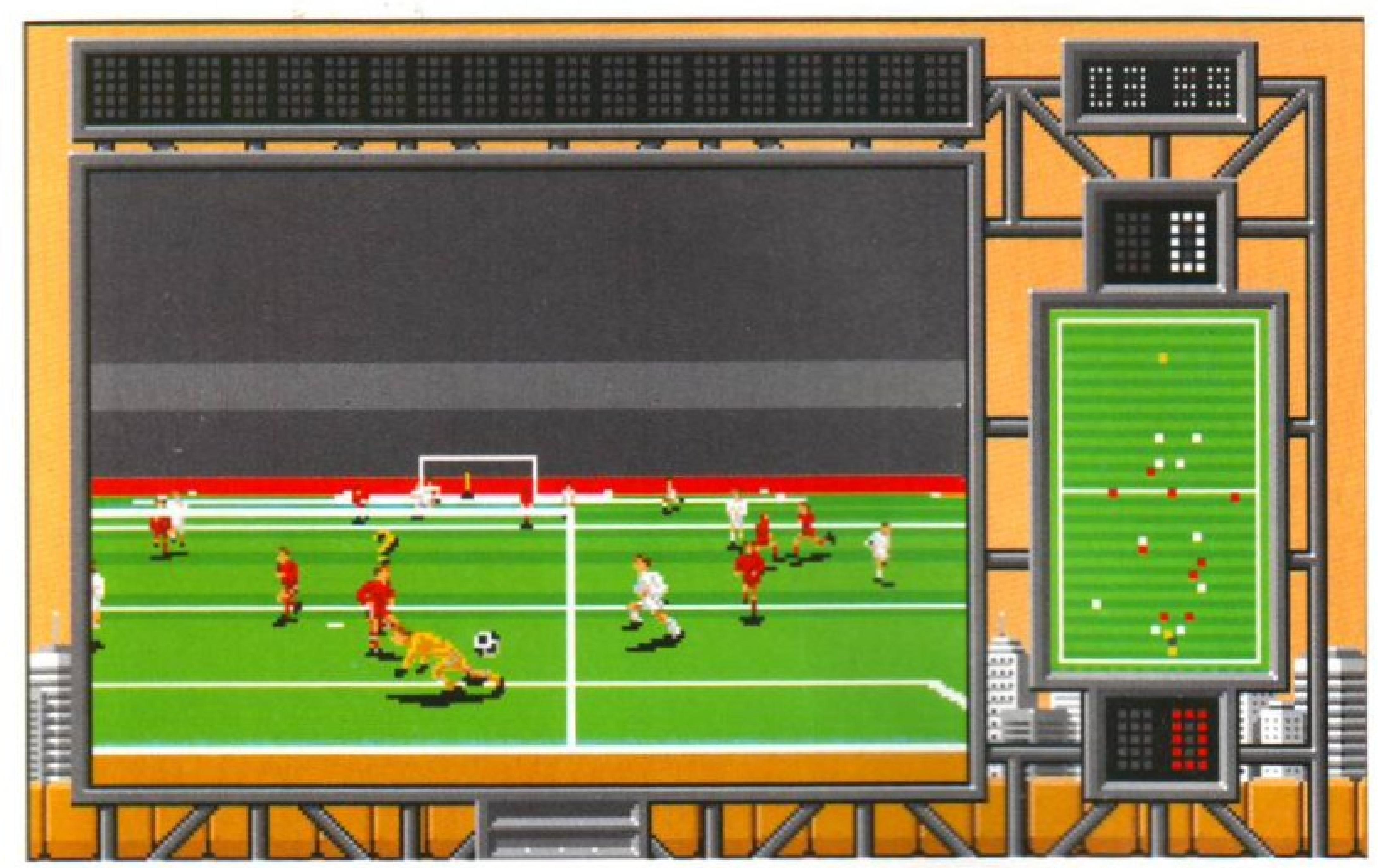
VERDICT

- **Presentation perfectly captures the feel of the comic.**
- **Tough action makes the game enjoyable but difficult to beat**
- **Progressive puzzles keep you thinking for a while.**
- **Package includes 13 issues worth of *2000 AD Rogue Trooper* strips.**





The GI must search everything and everywhere if he is to escape alive. Barriers of explosive material can prove to be handy makeshift explosives that may shift a wall or two. That bottle of acid on the shelf past the Nort may be another wall remover. Bagman can store it safely until you need it, so kill and grab!



Disaster... they've taken a shot at goal. But hey, our "wonder-hands" goalie saves the day.... Hoorah! Hoorah! The map on the right shows where the players are who can take advantage of the rebound. Knowing where they are is one thing but taking control or passing to them could prove a touch awkward.

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER CHALLENGE

MICROPROSE £24.99 ■ Joystick

It was a fairly safe bet (you could have bet your knackers) that there were going to be a million and one football simulators released this year. World Cup fever reached a frenzy and the Amiga game which was on the receiving end of that frenzy was *Kick Off II*. It would seem, therefore, to be this side of commercial suicide to release yet another footy game, especially after we all overdosed on Gazza and the boys.

Microprose have decided that there's room for "just one more upstairs" and have proffered their offering at the door of the *Amiga Format* offices. So what is it that makes this game any different to the zillion other footy simulators already on the market? As soon as you load the game it becomes obvious that where *Soccer Challenge* tries to be different is in the graphics department.

Whose the Geezer in the Black?

The game starts with a flying camera view, gliding over the back of the stadium and down on to the pitch. It then pans right and we watch the players jog out of the tunnel and onto the pitch to assume their positions. This is where the animation first hits you. The jogging of the players is spot on and these are no matchstick sized, three pixels high pinpricks.

The game is viewed from about head height, from behind the players. However, just how much of the pitch you see depends on whether you've chosen to play in position or as the whole team. If you choose the in-position mode things can get very frustrating because half the time you're completely out of shot. This is, however, a more realistic viewpoint than most football games offer.

Considering the realistic graphics, it's a shame that the scrolling is so bad. When there's more than three players in shot they start moonwalking all over the place and the scrolling slows down considerably. As a result it's hard to concentrate on getting the ball off another player. Another annoying feature is the fact that you can run straight through the other players. I know the Italians try this trick all the time, but in a footy simulator we could do without it!

Taking The Soft Option

From the options menu you can either play a World Cup game or a Superleague. The World Cup option enables you to play for one of the 24 sides that made it to Italy this year. The Superleague option consists of all the best teams from around the world - most of whom didn't make it to Italy. You can also enter your team in place of one of the other sides. Game length times and the standard of the computer-controlled team can be adjusted and you can even enter your own striker's name.

Practice That'll Make You Go Blind

The practise section of *Soccer Challenge* is awful. It enables you to spend a few happy minutes trying hopelessly to kick the ball to another player. It's a completely hopeless task, requiring pinpoint accuracy and exactly the right strength. If you can manage after less than half-an-hour you deserve to be capped. You'll get far better by simply playing the game a couple of times.

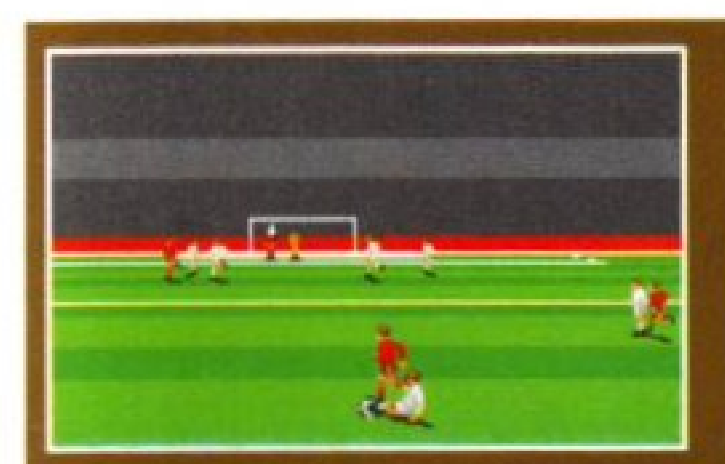
Perhaps the most serious failing of the game is the lack of a two player option. It could be argued that very few people actually engage in a head-to-head with a friend, but at least the option is there if you do need it. The game offers no lasting interest and is almost entirely unaddictive.

Andy Hutchinson

VERDICT

- Soccer challenge is too slow.
- Doesn't bring anything new to the art of football simulation.
- Graphics are attractive, but scrolling and gameplay is very poor.
- Good looking but low on gameplay.
- Lacks two-player option!

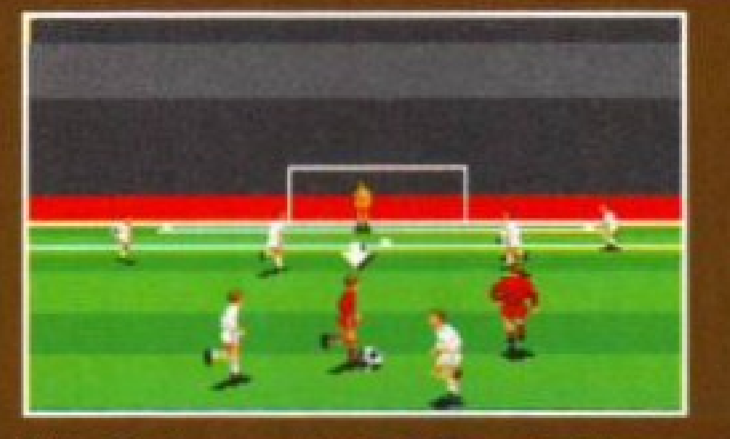




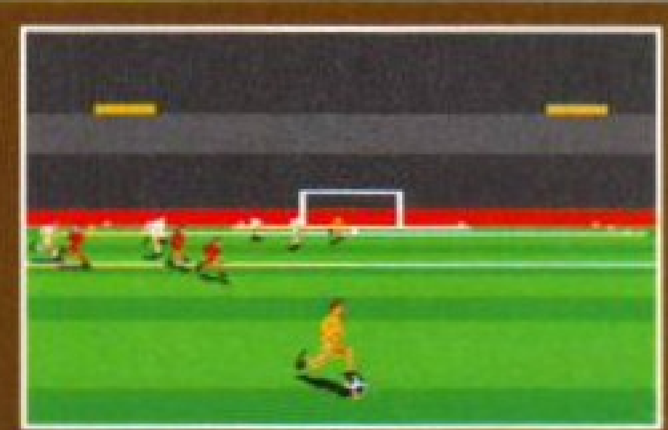
Hey now old chap... steady on. That tackle was a bit low and dirty. The referee obviously needs to change his prescription for his glasses



Kick off and the Liverpool lads decide to play a waiting game. Let the other team freeze to death, that might slow down their response times.



What's happening? Liverpool's striker is making a run up the pitch. Could this lead to a goal...

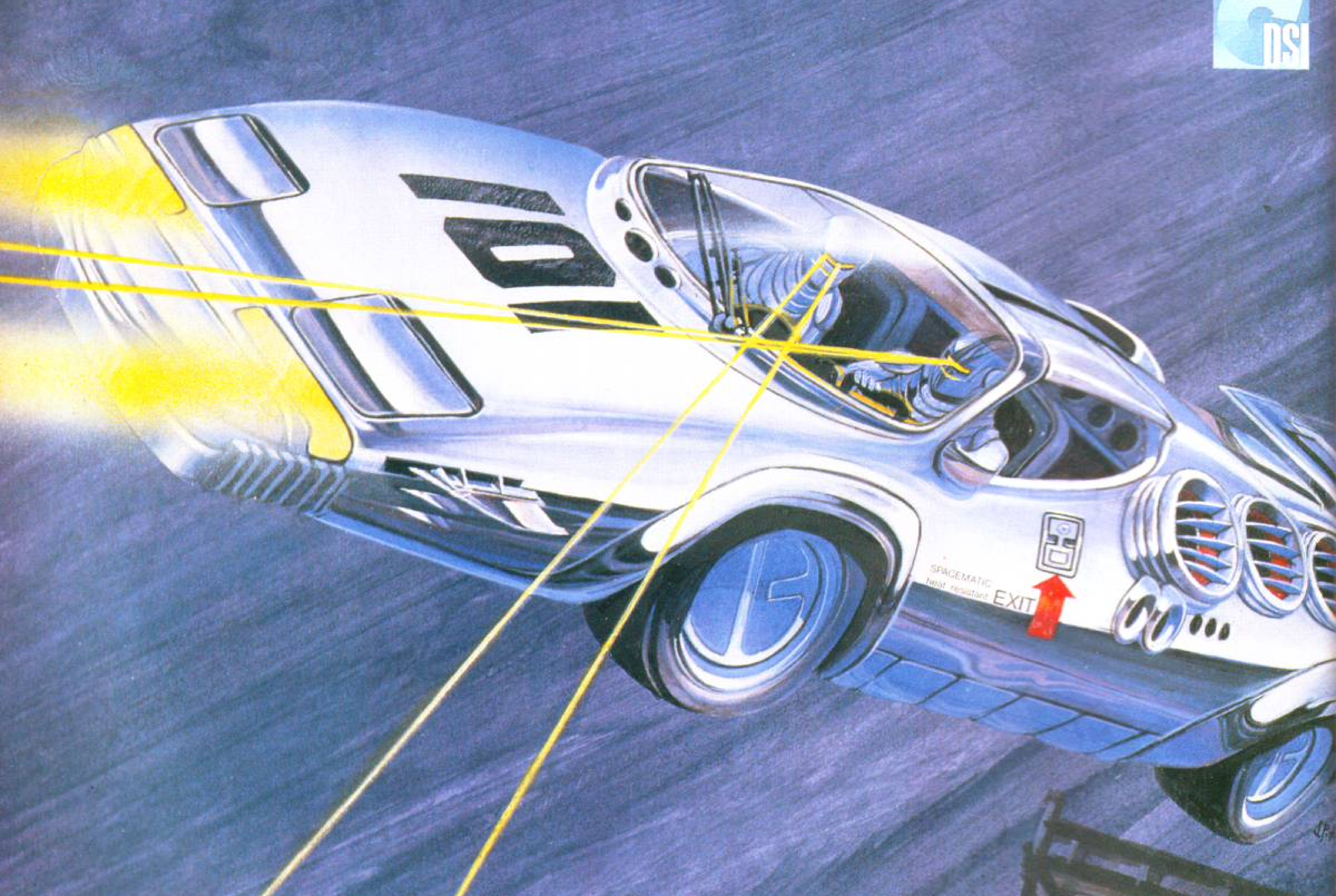


It's the match of the year. Liverpool versus... well some foreign team, and we all know that they don't count anyway. The lads run out onto the pitch...



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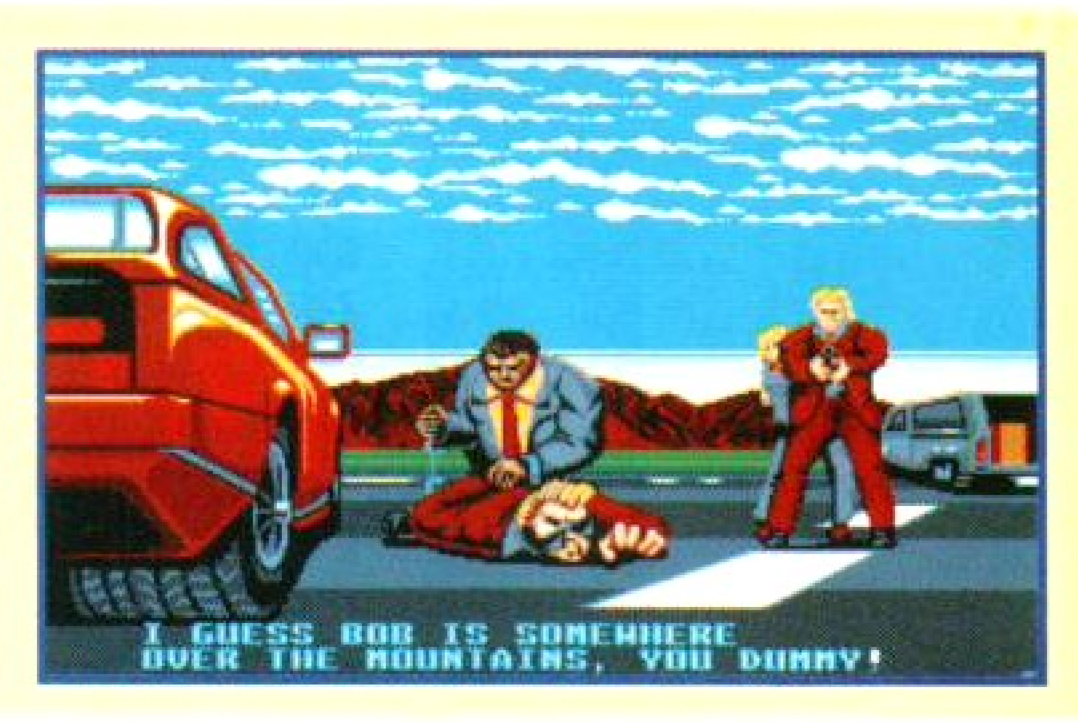
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IBM PC & Compatibles. CGA, EGA, VGA/256 or Tandy graphics. Roland, Soundblaster or Adlib sound cards. Amiga and Atari ST available January 1991.

Community Policing the SCI Way.

Our concerned community coppers clean up crime in Coin-op City. After a courageous car chase the cantankerous criminal is caught, questioned and cuffed.





SCI–CHASE HQ II

OCEAN £24.99 ■ Joystick, mouse or keyboard

If all crimes were as easy to solve as those in *SCI*, we'd never have to suffer Nick Ross and *Crimewatch* again. All the felons in Taito's coin-op world walk about with a large red arrow above their head bearing the word CRIMINAL, which is a bit of a giveaway. Mind you the two tec's who star in this cops and robbers, car-chase game don't have it all their own way. While the crooks are easy to spot they ain't easy to catch.

SCI – Special Criminal Investigation – takes over where *Chase HQ* left off. Two policeman drive, under your command, a special high-powered car enforcing the law. After they get a call from Nancy, at Chase HQ, telling them which criminals are about then it's race time. With turbos on full, they're off in hot pursuit along winding roads – ramming the villains into submission. The boys get a gun this time too, which they use to cut a path through slower traffic by blowing them up. It's harsh but it's fair – everyone gets blasted.

60 Seconds to Comply

The chase splits into two sections. First comes the pursuit of the criminal, who has a substantial lead. Once they are in sight the second section commences: sirens go on, the big red arrow appears and you've 60 seconds to ram them off the road. To give the coppers a helping hand, a police chopper drops in a bazooka for some extra firepower. As the damage clocks up – from ramming, gun shots or bazooka shells – a small meter appears on-screen which allows you to gauge your success.

SCI went down a storm in the arcades and it has carried its coin-op baggage to the Amiga in full. Explosions litter the screen and the roads flick by at real speed. You control both the car, turbos and the gun-toting passenger. They must be used to the full if the bad guys are to do time. The tactics are simple; go as fast as possible then ram and shoot the crook, side-swiping lame drivers en route.

SCI features an impressively fast red car, good backgrounds and enough similarity to the arcade – roadwise – to satisfy any coin-op junkie. The villains are obvious, but are hard to hit. They are surrounded by outriders and continually try to sucker pursuers into time consuming errors. The turbos are crazily fast and rate as the high point of the whole show.

Identity Crisis

Everything works the way it aught to and looks the way police pursuit games should. There is something missing from *SCI* however. It lacks any real identity and as such doesn't exactly scream "play me". That certain something that makes arcade conversions, like *Pang* and *Rainbow Islands* (both from Ocean), so compulsive just isn't there.

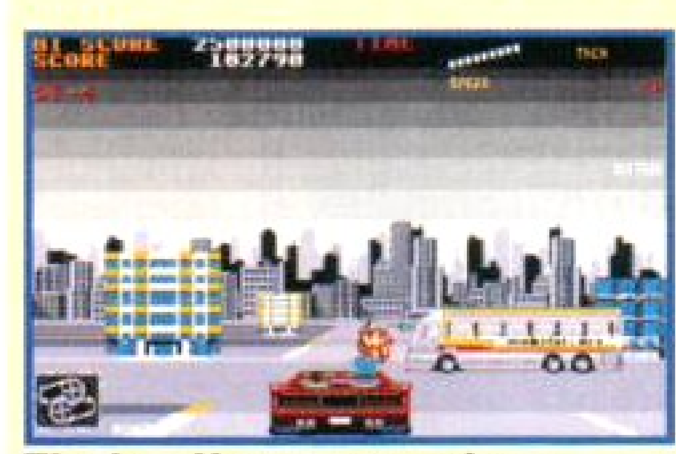
SCI relies on the need for speed, spiced with a little firepower, for its addictive edge. Efforts have been made to support the game with loads of digitised speech and curiously violent arrest cameos, but the trimmings can't really make the game.

SCI is fun, but repetitive. The main improvement to the *Chase HQ* formula is a gun, and again added firepower doesn't significantly increase the gameplay quotient. The graphics are good, but there is nothing that makes *SCI* challenging. Without this *SCI* is consigned to that jam of car games on the motorway of life.

Trenton Webb



Nancy calls in the details of the next criminal and warns of any dangers. On Stage four it is a bus that leaps out of nowhere and cuts you up. Typical of buses – they don't come in ones but threes!



The bus Nancy warned you about appears in the middle of the chase. You are going to hit it and lose time now, so you might as well blast a few shots at it.



The chopper drops in some heavy artillery. Catch the bazooka and you get a few high-powered shots to take down the criminal with.



The criminal takes a hit. The van with the criminal in will only take a few more shots to finish if that fire is anything to go by.



The passenger gets trigger-happy and starts to shoot at cars that aren't even there. He was in 'Nam you know...

VERDICT

- Impressive graphics and good use of digitised speech.
- Basically *Chase HQ* with a gun and better pictures.
- Little real gameplay, just speed, bangs and more speed.
- Lacks an addictive edge.
- Thorough arcade conversion that lacks personality.



LINE O

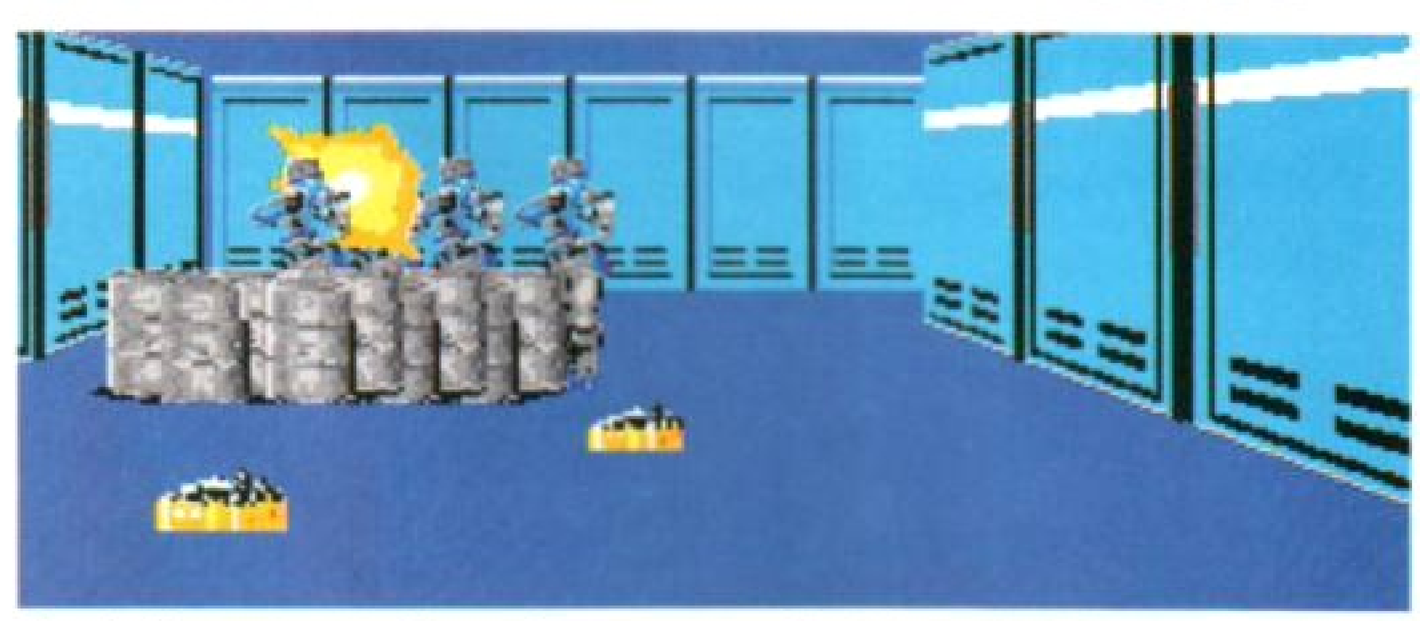
US GOLD £24.99 ■ Mouse

There's chattering machine-gun fire, ear-popping grenade impacts, the clatter of spent cartridges and the thump of bodies hitting the deck. Act fast, you're in the Line of Fire. Never before has such destructive potential been harnessed by one man. But never before has one man had to fight such ridiculous odds.

Line of Fire (LOF) brought a new angle to the arcade stand-up blasts. Panning, like a film camera, the players view swooped around the battleground. The mobile standpoint allowed air, land and river battles to be enacted as players were thrown down valleys, ruins and similar locations, each filled to sardine-standards with trigger-happy enemies.

Most impressive is the panoramic feel that's straight from the arcade version. On the final 'chopper' level the whole level spins beneath your feet. Canyons turn to reveal whole corridors lined with soldiers, while on the river section unexpected turns hurl ever more dangers your way. They are not as polished as the original, and it has the occasional slowdown, but they are a strong imitation.

The games pace inspires a sharp intake of breath. When a level's complete, the volume of foes alone ensures this, but there maybe too many health packs for *LOF's* own good, as there is a bonus at the end of each level, so you never start a level totally knack'ed.



The bullets start to fly and up pop your first targets. The men aren't the most important thing here. If they can be killed quickly enough then sweep down and hit the yellow boxes which contain grenades.

Crate Stuff

LOF sends one or two players, and five credits, on an eight-level charge into the charnel house. They have an unlimited supply of bullets, but limited life and grenades. These can be topped-up by shooting first-aid packs and crates of bombs. All you have to do is blast the bad guys before they do the same unto you.

With a mouse-controlled cursor the impact point of the bullet can be chosen. The left button sends a hail of white-hot lead-death blasting towards the crosshairs. The right button fires a rifle grenade that smart bombs everything on screen.

"Ugh!"

Incoming bullets register with an "ugh!", a flashing damage sign and an energy deduction from your status bar. Incoming rockets can be shot if you're quick enough, but thankfully the enemy never master the same trick.

The enemy win by a process of attrition, because most fall after a single shot. Yet when one dies there's always another eager and ready to take their place; their sights trained on your frail bod. After blasting through a level you have to take on a particularly tough piece of hardware or bullet merchant. These guys deliver heavier damage and must be hit with everything you've got, if you are to reach the post-stage health bonus.

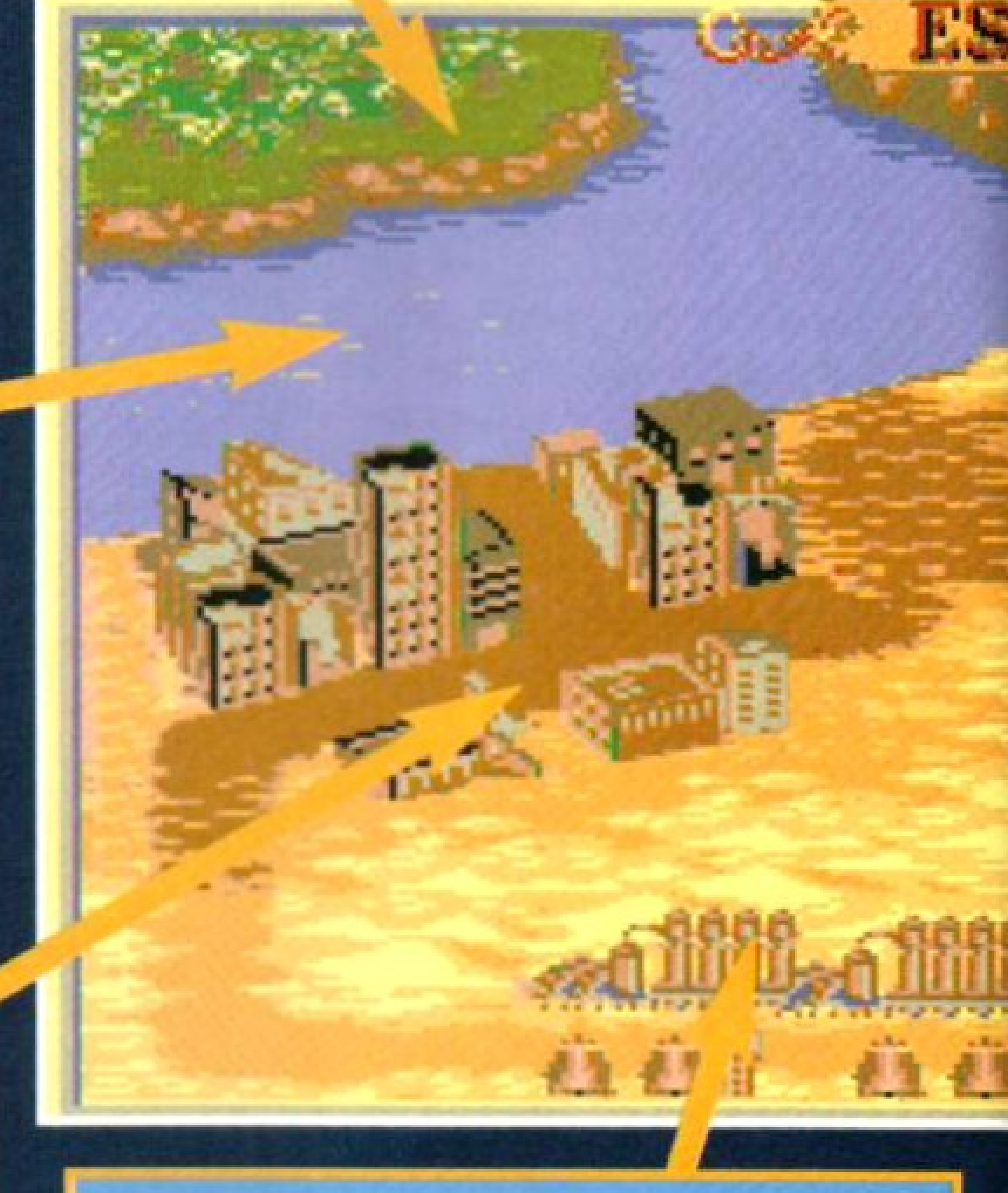
It's Raining Lead!

The action is fast and the bullets rain down. The graphics mimic their arcade parent as well as any non-custom circuit set could hope to. The bullet-ridden victims look good, the explosions are bright and the cursor crosshair is readily visible – occasionally, though, the colours are rather odd and the sprites unfortunately tend to look rather blocky. Pity.

Fighting all Over the Map.



Mission 8 Escape by helicopter. Fly over hordes of troops and get shot to pieces. Watch out for unexpected credit loss. Forget killing this is for survival! Keep using the rocket bombs and try to shoot as many health packs as possible!





Mission 7 Evade the enemy aircraft. A real toughie, fight a near-indestructible plane and then submarines by the score. The little subs must be shot to stop them firing missiles and then, in between, you must strafe the conning tower of the big sub. Save the grenades for the last level. You are going to need them.

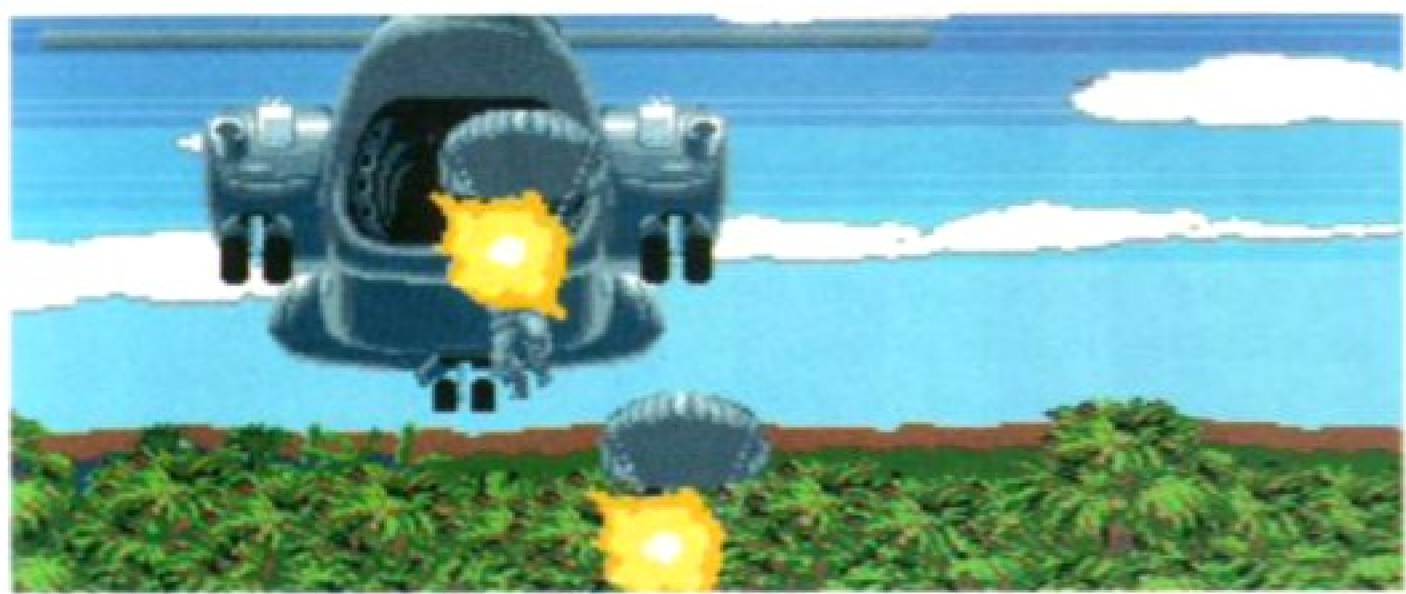


Mission 6 Foes await you in the city's ruins. The dullest level, shoot the guys while they try to hide behind buildings. In two player mode the right hand (player two) gets the short end of the stick as the screen scrolls to the left. He gets all the enemies immediately while player one (left) can wait. Still the easiest level though!



Mission 5 Do-or-die battle in the desert. Running across open ground with troops flooding in from all sides. Look out for the train you have to destroy to destroy.

F FIRE

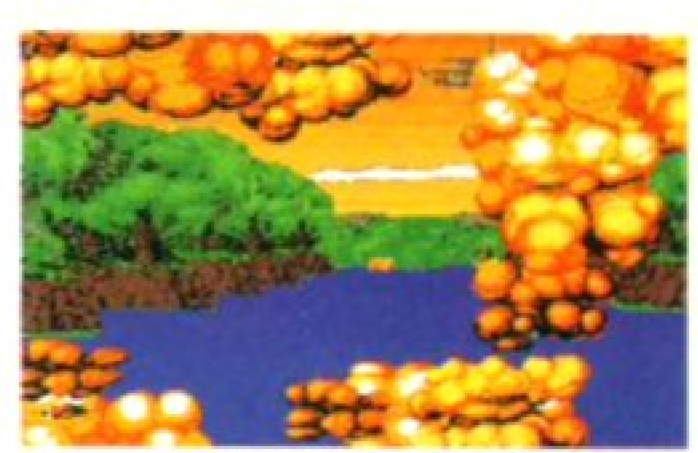


The para's will shoot as they leap from the chopper and do you damage. You must try to shoot the helicopter and the men at the same time, because the men only stop coming when the chop' is destroyed.

Two Players + Five Credits = Trouble

With two players *LOF* has a tougher edge. There are the same number of pick-ups regardless of the number of players and only five credits. So while the solo shooter has enough credits to 'buy through' the tougher levels, duos compete for the health packs, grenades and extra lives.

Tactically it's vital to remember that you need only worry about half the screen, because only the enemies in front of your blaster actually shoot at you. This is where the twisting nature of the screen helps *LOF* leave *Op Thunderbolt* for dead, as it sweeps you into enemies paths. Expect the unexpected!



Fire in the Hold! A grenade goes off and smart bombs all the enemies in one go. Destroying any incoming fire, proving to be life-savers in those sticky moments.

The gameplay is largely reliant on the speed of a soldier's shot. Yet careful observation can pay high dividends on the survival front. Each guardian has a specific weakness and attack pattern, work it out and they soon cease to be troublesome. The abundance of health packs mean that priorities of attack vary from level to level. Sometimes it's best to kill continuously, at other points it's advisable to hunt the first-aid kits. It even pays to die in certain circumstances, if you've credits left, to provide a fresh supply of health and grenades.

LOF is good violent fun. There's absolutely no strategy, no justification for such blatant aggression and no subtlety; just heads down, guns-blasting action. *LOF* lacks staying power , once the game has been completed. This is aggravated the by the game's leanings towards the easier side of life. *LOF*'s instant hook, however, cannot be denied. "Exterminate all the brutes," Mr Kurtz once said and he was right, at least about *Line of Fire*. ***Trenton Webb***

A Stage by Stage Guide.

You have to fight your way around the map in a bid to escape the enemy. There are eight separate battles to fight.

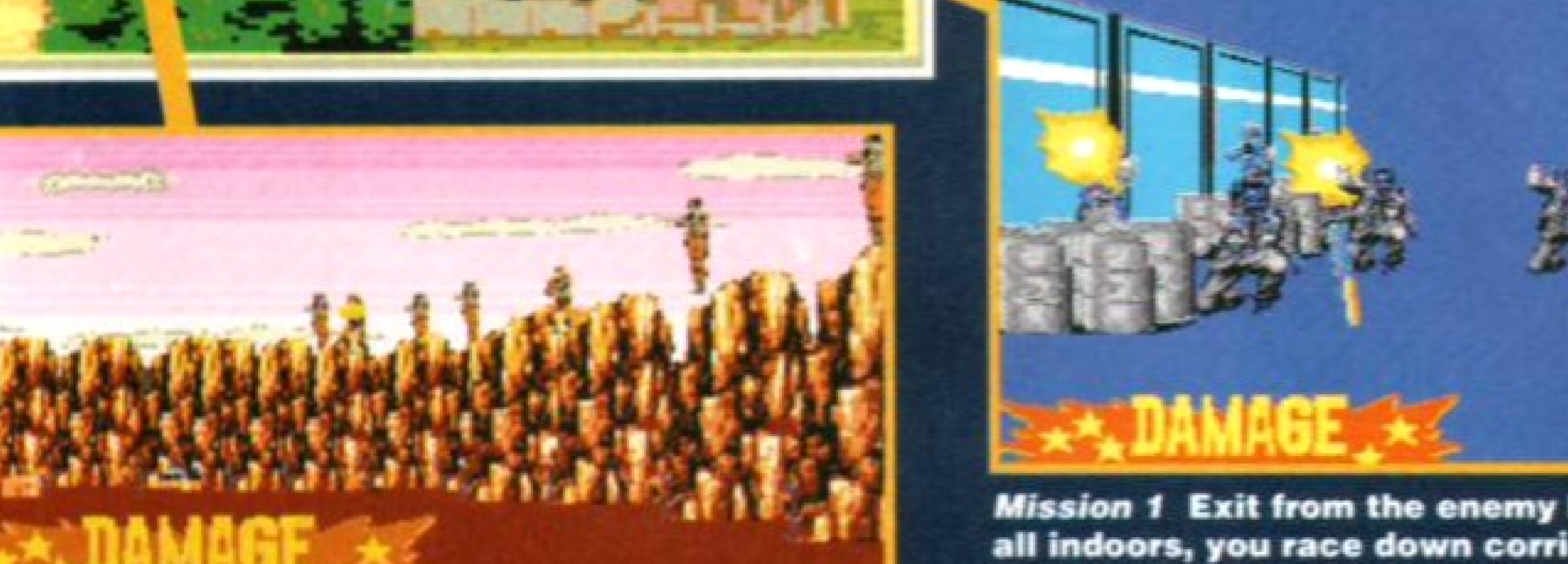


Mission 3 **Exit by high-speed boat. Floating down the river, fight bombers and soldiers standing chest-deep in water. Watch them float face down when dead. The bombers are the main pain, so use grenades to trash screenfulls in one go.**





Mission 2 **Destroy the enemy jungle base. This mission lets you fight tanks and helicopters for the first time. Watch out for gun towers, they hurt. This is the first really heavy level so make sure you keep shooting the missiles which rip in from all angles. Luckily there are plenty of health packs and grenade crates up for grabs.**



Mission 1 **Exit from the enemy base. This one's all indoors, you race down corridors with guys hiding behind oil-drums and popping-up from manholes. Easy meat, this is just a practice level with few sudden swings of perspective to confuse the shooters. The end guys are wimps!**

Mission 4 **Fighting in the canyon. Ride down into valleys of death with soldiers shooting down at you. As the game sweeps around send them flying like skittles to their doom.**

VERDICT

- **Totally senseless violence is back, and is as much fun as ever.**
- **A stand-up shoot-out that leans to the easy side. At long last!**
- **LOF even has gameplay – of sorts.**
- **Some dodgy sprites are balanced by impressive, panoramic, sweeping landscapes.**
- **No staying power but enough hook to shame the QE2's anchor.**



Manby games take us into the future, with a view of the advances in technology and weaponry. It's funny how this weaponry always comes in useful for repelling alien attackers.

In *Shockwave* the year is 2167 and you are in command of a prison outpost. This acts as a terminal for transporting criminals to a maximum-security prison colony on the moon. The situation has remained an easy one...up until now that is.

Revolution, Baby!

The exiled Lunar colonists have decided that enough-is-enough and have built four orbiting attack stations. The invading revolutionaries are now closing in on your outpost, – now designated as the new command centre for Earth's defence.

The game begins in the station as you survey the battle situation in the Control Room. This is where your battle tactics are constructed. You must protect four sectors: mining, oil-drilling, manufacturing and the military, all vital to your survival; careful planning is required to keep them all on line. The strategy works well, affecting the shoot-em-up sections and thus adds to the gameplay.

Once you have selected the area you wish to patrol, you can nip-off to the armoury, stock up your ship's weapons and head-off on your flight.

Turn on, Fly Out, Burn Up

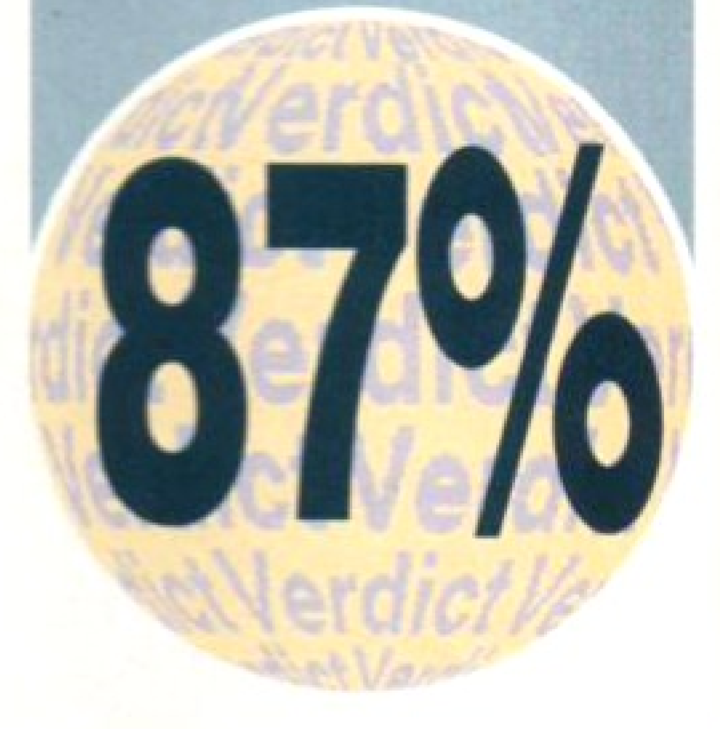
You then climb aboard your fighter and fly out over a fast-moving *Afterburner*-style landscape, with the enemy rushing towards you in 3D. To complete a run you must take out the required number of attackers before your fuel runs out or your ship's shields are destroyed, ending your game. Tackling the enemy craft is not your only problem, though, there are various pieces of scenery that can take down your shield level. Avoiding the obstacles while still blasting the target ships is pretty hairy at first, but once you get the knack it's great fun.

Occasionally you will be asked to control a secret mission. This involves flying a drone along a 3D trench avoiding the obstacles along the way. If you reach the end before the timer runs out, the drone ship will explode and destroy the rebel station, forcing them to have to regroup.

If you let the rebels advance too far your command post will be overrun. However if you can survive ten attack waves, then reinforcements will arrive. ***Maff Evans***

VERDICT

- Incredibly fast, arcade-quality 3D graphics.
- Tactical section needs thought – has considerable effect on the outcome of shoot-em-up sections.
- It's tough to start with, but becomes a compulsive blast.
- Frantic action and involved strategy combine to make a surprisingly playable game.





Racing through the desert sector the Shockwave fighter aims to go low and tag some tanks. They are sly fighters though, and like to hide in front of rocks, which soon whittles down the shield supply.



In the forest sector on attack wave three. You now have guided missiles at your command but these are limited and tend to run out at crucial moments, forcing you to change weapons in mid-battle.

SHOCKWAVE

Digital Magic Software £24.99 ■ Mouse or Joystick

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AMIGA FORMAT - 87%
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"the sheer addictiveness will keep you coming back for just a quick couple of hours 'gaming' "
CU - "CU SCREEN STAR" - 87%
"Superbly converted with plenty of bounce."
"Pang plays BRILLIANTLY"
"Ocean have managed to capture the feel of the Arcade game perfectly - and that's what makes Pang a winner."
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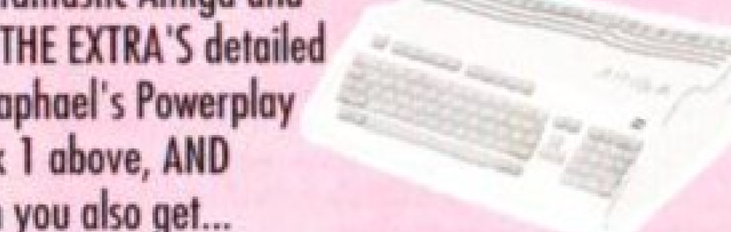
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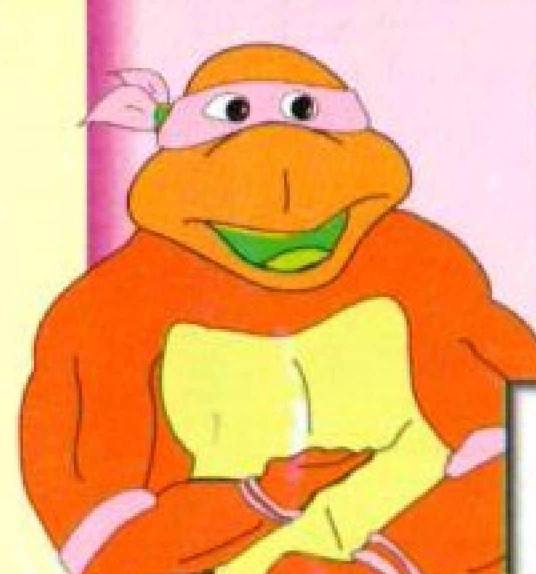


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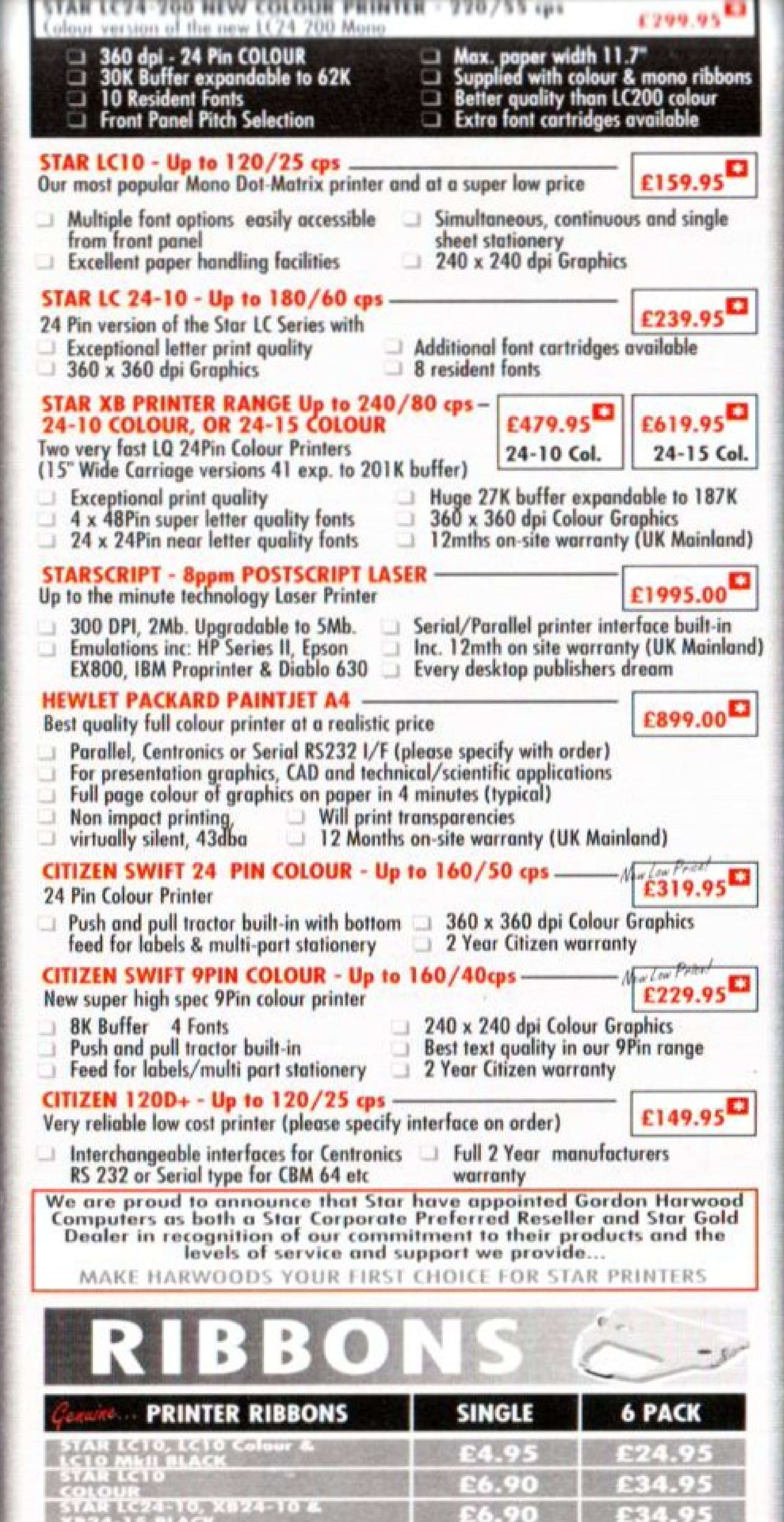


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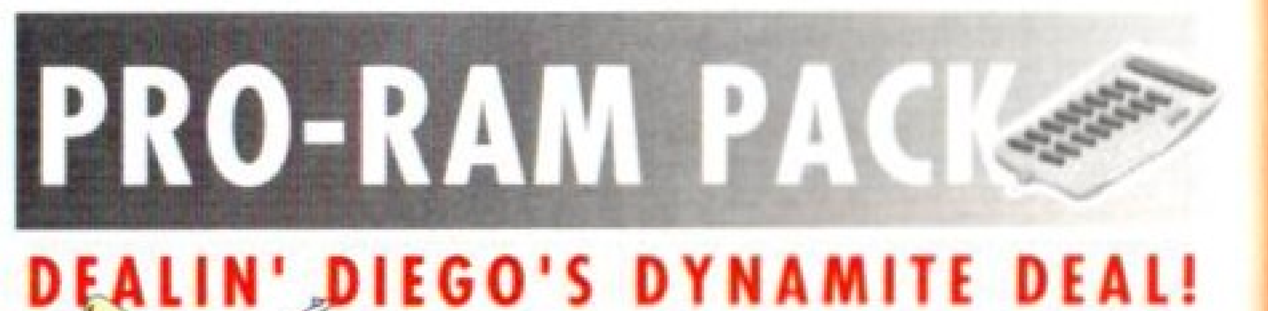
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SPINDIZZ

ACTIVISION £24.99 ■ Joystick

Plots only serve to justify the rules of computer games. Yet occasionally the plot is so ludicrous that only an explanation of the rules makes any real sense. *Spindizzy Worlds* is one such game, suffering from the same tortured games' logic that puts shops in shoot-em-ups, but is beautifully playable because of it. So here are the rules (in full):

1. You control a probe called GERALD by remote.
2. GERALD looks and behaves like a spinning top.
3. The worlds of Spindizzy must be explored using GERALD.
4. While it explores, GERALD uses fuel continuously.
5. The game is over if GERALD runs out of fuel.
6. GERALD extracts fuel from diamonds by standing on them.
7. The worlds of Spindizzy are littered with diamonds.
8. GERALD can be destroyed by touching aliens, or by falling either too far or into space.
9. A destroyed GERALD is replaced at the cost of surplus fuel.
10. Spindizzy consists of 32 different planets.
11. The worlds of Spindizzy are full of mazes, ramps and puzzles.
12. Each Spindizzy planet has many different levels.
13. GERALD travels between worlds and levels via teleports.
14. The teleports are only accessible if GERALD has completed a number of tasks or solved a puzzle.
15. The game is won when all the worlds have been visited.
16. GERALD stands for: Geographical Environmental Reconnaissance And Land mapping Device.

Controlling GERALD is tough. The surface of Spindizzy is shown from an isometric-3D perspective, so joystick commands must mentally be shifted through 45 degrees. To make the probe go in one direction turn the stick that way, to accelerate press fire. To stop, either reverse power or use the instant brake (spacebar). On a level surface with solid edges control would be easy, but the worlds are packed with ramps, pyramids, bridges, moving platforms and gaping gulfs that have to be negotiated.



Directional switches - these are a common sight in the Spindizzy Worlds. They are activated by travelling over them in the direction of the arrow. Their colour will then change and the switch will have been flicked. In this 'Tutorial World' hitting and highlighting all three causes the central brick in the north west to sink, allowing GERALD to grab the four diamond-fuel crystals.

GERALD - your friendly neighbourhood probe. Acting like a spinning top the Big G goes in the direction that the joystick is pushed. To go faster hit the fire button to stop suddenly hit the spacebar. GERALD is pretty rugged but is destroyed if he falls into space or from too great a height.

'Tutorial World'

Here you are introduced to the various styles of switches, lifts, ramps and other sundry traps that will make life difficult for GERALD over the next 130 levels. This map consists of over 24 different screens.

Y WORLDS

The sound garden - riding GERALD over any of the switches causes pretty sounds to fill the air. The spinning diamond is easily retrieved because there are no puzzles to solve. It's worth hanging around just for the sounds though!

You begin the Tutorial World in the centre and must clear all five 'rooms' before the exit becomes accessible.

Coloured switches - Most common on the earlier levels and worlds. They generally work in combination. Here the cubes with ariels are fatal to the touch. To make them disappear two of the switches have to be activated and none of the others hit in the process. Here the yellow circle makes the closest cube vanish, and the red square causes the farthest to go, leaving you free to grab the jewels and get the fuel.

This section is the last of this level of Tutorial World. Here slopes are encountered for the first time and judicious use of the fire button throttle is needed to climb the ramps. Collecting the flag and hitting the green switch turns on the green lift at the foot of the entrance archway. This will lift GERALD up onto the roof of the building where the exit teleport (yellow and brown square) sits. If you have collected all the fuel on the level then this will transport you to a bonus level.

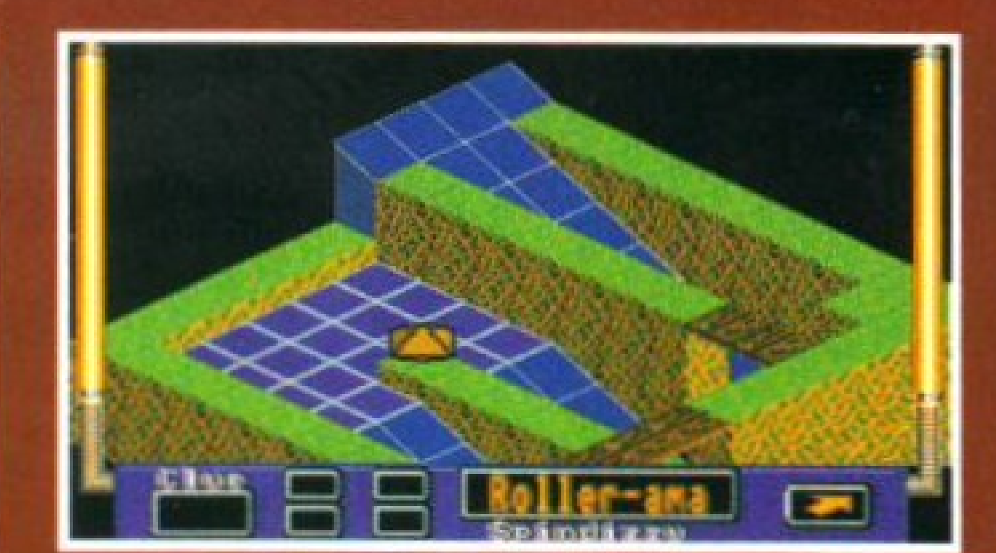
Lifts - these upwardly mobile platforms litter the Spindizzy Worlds. All these are activated by switches and generally must be turned on, or switched to go in to the correct height. In this example the red square switch in the centre of the room turns the red lift (top platform) on. This allows you to get up on the platform and grab diamonds. Before dropping off the platform, hit the green square switch and this will turn the green lift (bottom platform) on, which allows you to get the other fuel crystals.



Buxton Cat World – a daft name for a nasty world. It is mostly a test of close control, because the pathways are all slopes and skidways that have the single aim of landing GERALD in the deadly water-like liquid.



The map – once landed on a world, GERALD can create a rough miniature map of the level. This is particularly useful on Pyramidea where the steps of the pyramid each constitute a different level, all of which interact.



The fuel crystals are all easily visible, but it's controlling the spinning GERALD that proves the test. He has a rather natural tendency to slip all the way down slopes and into peril. The rotate keys are essential here.

After selecting which world in the Spindizzy cluster you are going to start on, the probe is then beamed down. When you land there will be one of two tasks awaiting there for you: firstly, the puzzle of finding the correct series of triggers that open a teleport, and secondly a speed challenge to reach teleport before a time limit expires. Either way using the map feature pauses the game and gives you a chance to work out a successful strategy.

Worlds Apart

The timed runs are dangerous. Each world hangs in space, just the way bricks don't, and one slip can take GERALD over the edge. This destroys the probe and gallons of fuel is used to build another. Puzzle levels usually require that multiple tasks are completed, all in the right sequence. Finding the triggers and the order in which to activate them, though, is down to trial and error.

Luckily GERALD does give clues. If he stands next to an object that has to be manipulated, then the activating factor is shown in his clue window. This tells you what has to be triggered, but not where it is or what has to be done to it. Then, once more you're off following the elimination trail.

The puzzles combine with the control of GERALD to make *Spindizzy* so playable. It's often all too obvious what has to be done, but it's the doing that proves difficult. Other worlds will have you roaming totally baffled as to what happens next. Solving these problems rewards you with another completed level for the saves disk and yet another even more fiendish poser staring you in the face.

Spindizzy Worlds has more strings to its bow than the straightforward game. Without points there is no obvious drive to play a world again after you've cleared it, so Paul Shirley – the games designer – has crammed the place with secret levels and bonus worlds. Then, there is the completion chart which shows just how thorough you've been in collecting all the fuel from certain levels and worlds. To make matters worse many of the worlds are accessible only after you've cleared planets on the periphery of the system. And you wouldn't want to go starting a new world with a badly damaged GERALD from a world that you can reach all ready.

Bigger Than a Very Big Thing

The whole game exudes bigness. The number of worlds in itself is almost daunting, but when the number of levels within each of them is considered then the brownie points start to roll in. A sense of the games size and complexity is felt when the first of the harder worlds is attempted. The map for a single level scrolls to four or five screens and they are all tied together by the puzzles. A switch in one corner activating a lift on the far side allows you to jump on to a trampoline over some lava in the centre...

The success of this puzzle-control game is dependent on how visible all the elements required to solve it are. The graphics, while all on a theme related to the worlds' name: Lavalite, Sandy Island, Waterworks, always allow alternative views of where GERALD is sitting with rotate keys. So while you may think you're stuck, at least you can look at the problem four different ways.

The worlds stress the complexity of the apparently simple design. All sculpted out of similar blocks, every new world seems to have a surprise up its sleeve. The variety of surfaces, inclines, aliens, trampolines, lifts and other hazards make control peculiar to each world. The worlds grow harder as you get nearer the heart of the Spindizzy system.

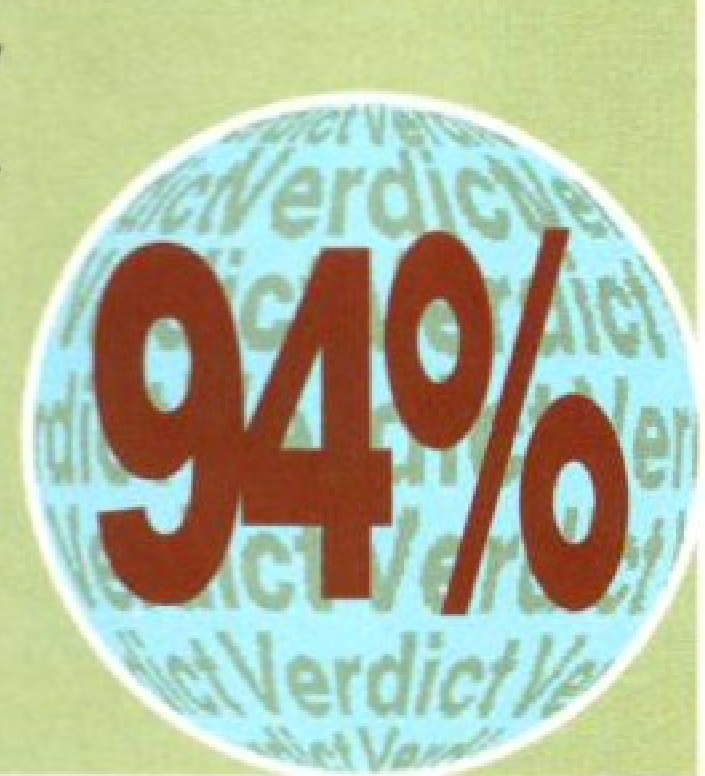
GERALD Grows Up

Fiendish puzzles, curious worlds and heaps of gameplay have been crammed into the project. The result is a challenge that is both frustrating and addictive. Players growing skill in control of GERALD has been well judged in the increasing difficulty of worlds. The chance to replay levels is also refreshing, in these long-dark days when restart points seem to be getting further under the guise of gameplay.

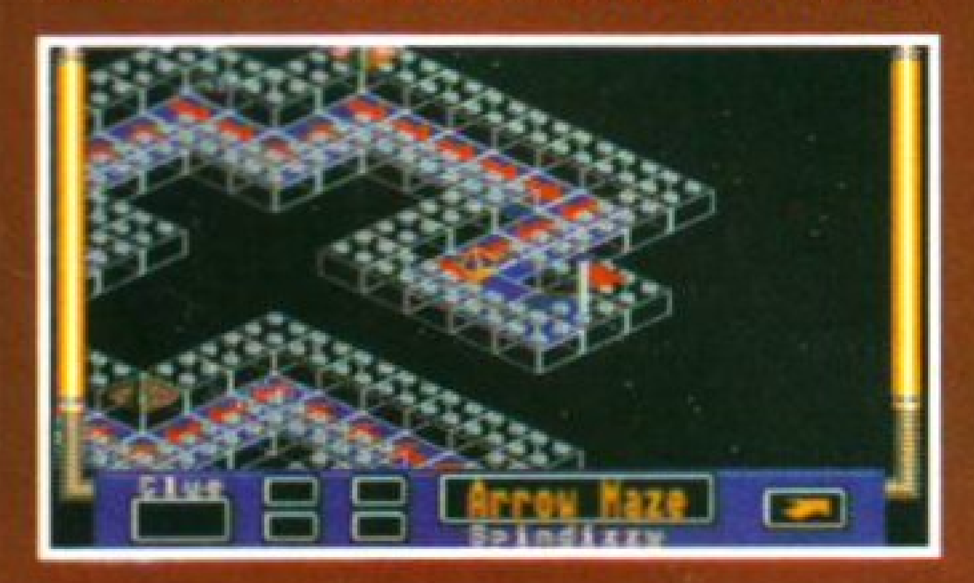
Features have been added, since the original made its mark on the Speccies, which enhance the game and use the Amiga to the full. It was a good concept then, but it had to wait for the Amiga before its potential could be fully exploited (the ST had flick screens not a scroll). Now GERALD's time has come, and it is time to really explore those Spindizzy Worlds.
Trenton Webb

VERDICT

- Absolutely-enormous galaxy of different puzzle planets.
- Vast scope for skill development in the control of GERALD.
- Intensive gameplay is alive and well and living on the Spindizzy Worlds.
- Wonderfully odd music and brilliantly simple graphics.
- Puzzles so tricky they'd make Einstein wince.



Arrow Maze – arrowed squares try to force GERALD in a set – generally fatal – direction. You can counter this with extra thrust but you run the risk of over doing it and flying into space. Use the map to check the route.



Pak Attack – Just like the real thing GERALD has to roam the maze, avoiding the pak creatures until he eats a power pill. Then the boot is on the other foot, temporarily! The fuel is guarded by hordes of pacs, so plan ahead.



Castle Quest – one of the inner worlds of the Spindizzy Cluster. This is only available for exploration after you have cleared a path through one or two of the outer worlds and is suitably difficult for a later level. Good luck.



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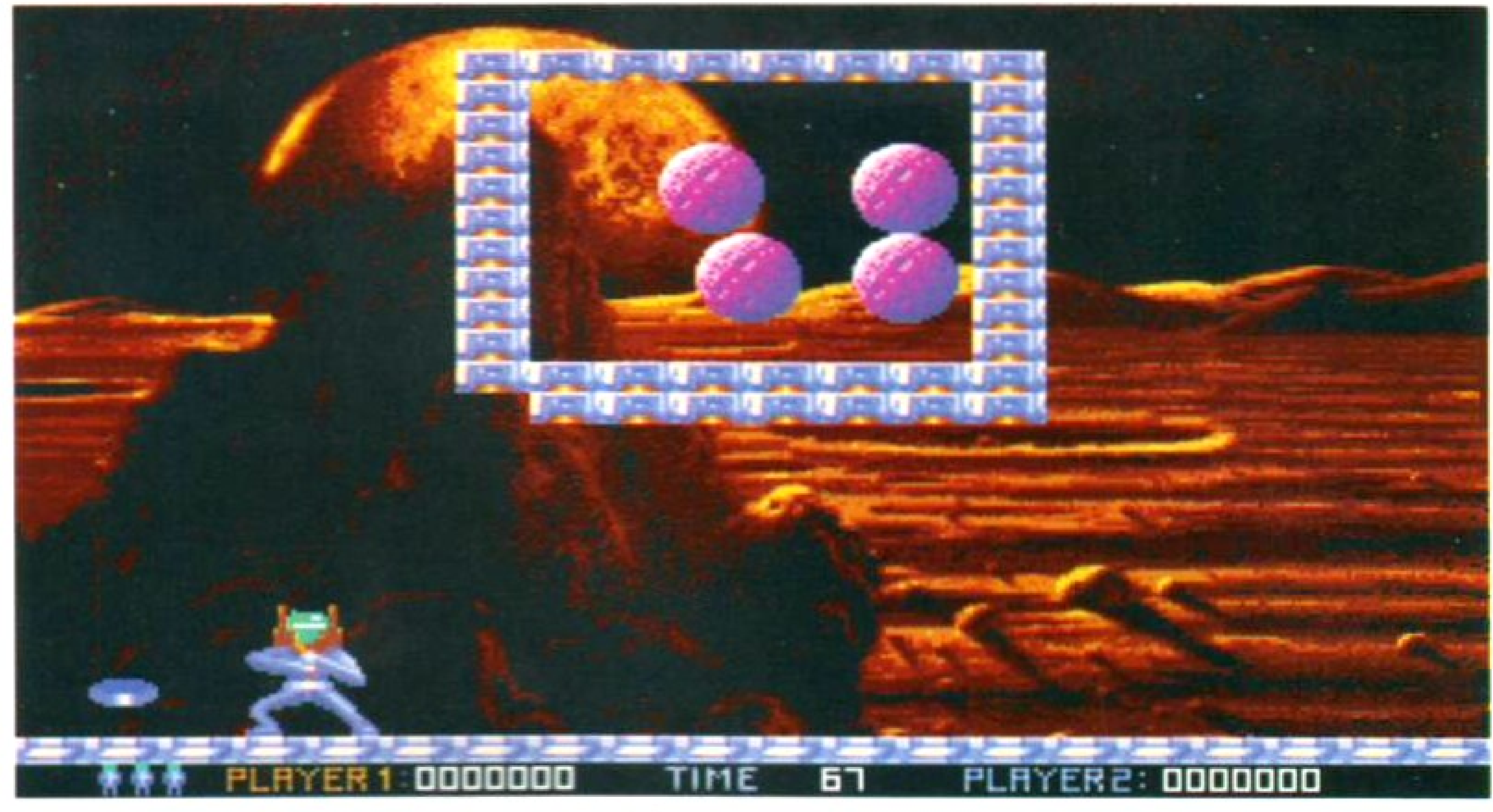
Entertainment Software

After last issue's review of the official arcade conversion of *Pang*, along comes Demonware's 'interpretation' of the harpoon-and-bubble romp, this time set in the cold depths of outer space rather than the world's top tourist spots.

You've Got the Power

You play an astronaut who is trapped in a group of galaxies far away from Earth. You must travel between 100 of these galaxies collecting tokens to buy a section of a huge space ship capable of getting you back home.

This would be a doddle if it was just a matter of hopping to a new world and picking up your token, but things are never that easy, are they? In order to escape the current galaxy, you must use a



Hmmm! Problems, problems for the people of Ooops Up. The game demands that the little guy with the gun has to destroy the balls by hitting them with the chain from his grappling hook. On this level the player first has to shoot the blocks away that surround the balls. Then by allowing them to bounce free he must dodge and destroy all the balls. Don't forget to collect the coin before each level is completed. In the story this allows you to buy the next part of your space ship. Think this is tough? This is only level 20 out of 100!

OOOPS UP!

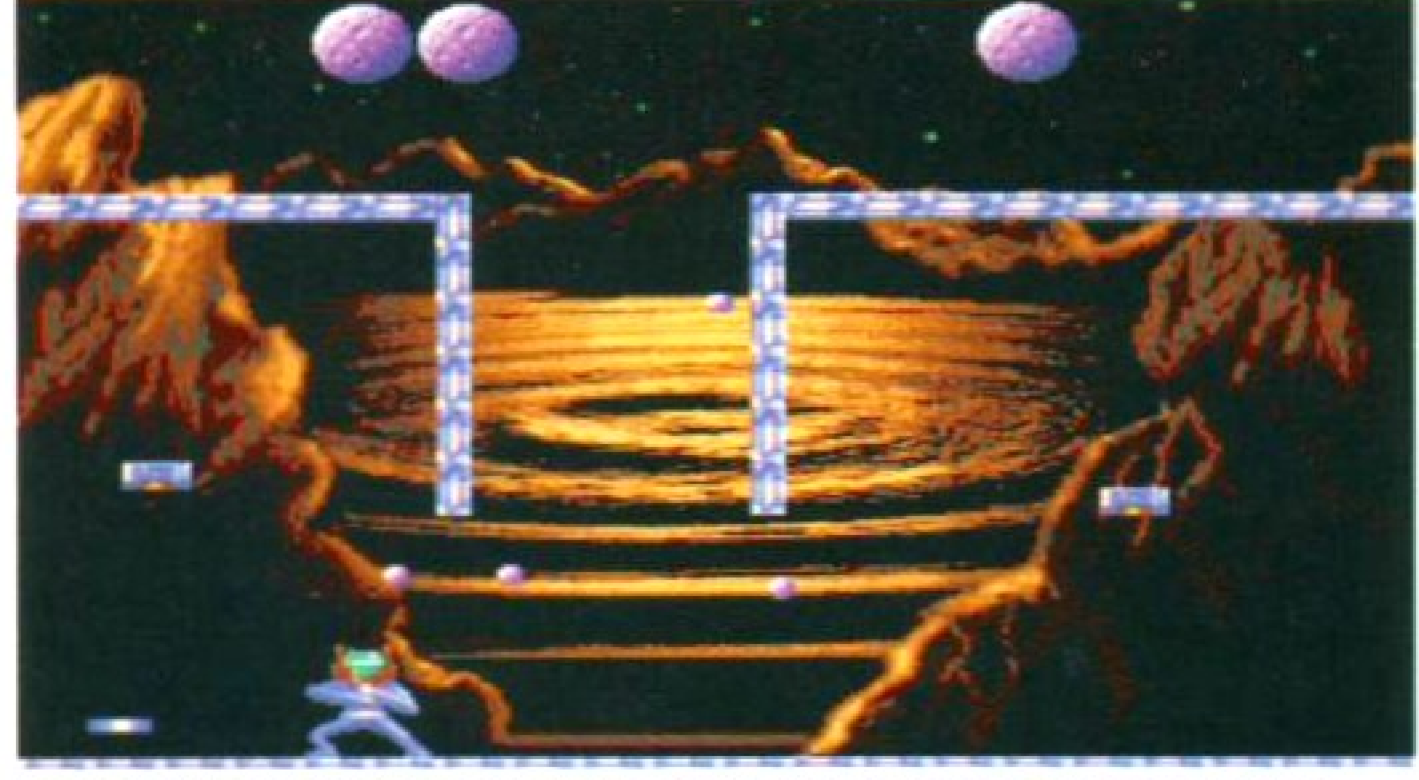
Demonware Software Business £24.95 ■ Joystick

powerful harpoon to clear the zone of asteroids, thus making it safe to transport to the next area. Occasionally, you may uncover an additional power-up to help you in your task, from double-shot weapons, via time freezers to double-barrelled laser guns.

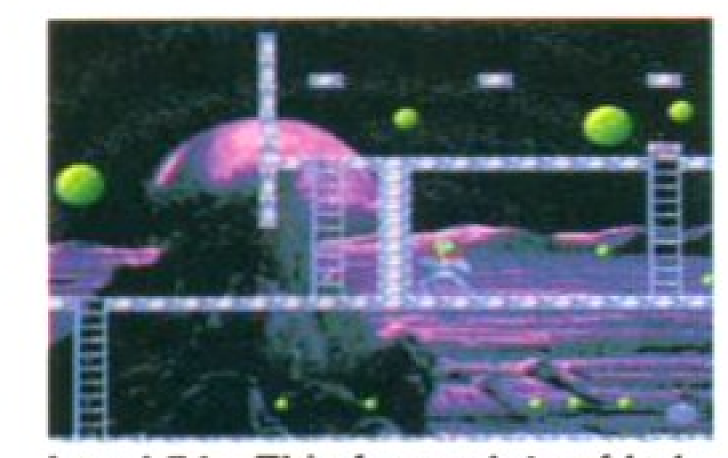
Despite these helpful items, completing the later levels is extremely difficult. At times the gameplay seems to throw up an annoying quirk, such as the frustrating habit the asteroids have of flying straight down narrow gaps at high speeds, making them almost impossible to dodge. Couple this with the difficulty encountered when making the player climb and walk off ladders and you've got a hefty task ahead of you, in fact completing anything after level 80 requires near superhuman timing not to mention extreme patience!

If you have a friend who's into the idea of travelling through space armed only with a harpoon, then you can compete against each other on the same screen. If one player dies, then the other continues playing in an attempt to reach the end of the level and claim all the bonus for themselves.

If you're a hardened shoot-em-up fan, then you may find *Ooops Up* enjoyable for a while, and once you get into the gameplay there are 100 levels to tackle before the game is completed. ***Maff Evans***



As your Ooopsian hero hunts the balls, icons drop. These are often beneficial – extra time, more lives and better weapons. However, there are a number of nasties, such as instant death! Icons look like the effects they give: icey clocks mean time freeze, death heads...



Level 74 – This forces lots of ladder climbing and good timing. Only 26 to go though!



The ship you are playing the game to build. Here it has 17 pieces, how far can you get?

SNAPPY SOUNDTRACK

So where does a game about asteroids, platforms and harpoons get a name like Ooops Up? Well this question is answered simply by turning up the game's sound, since throughout the proceedings an instrumental version of Snap's cover version of 'Oops Upside Your Head' plays. Remember the title of the single. That's right! Ooops Up!

Demonware's next project also has a Snap tie-in, this time with their first hit 'The Power'. Should be interesting.

VERDICT

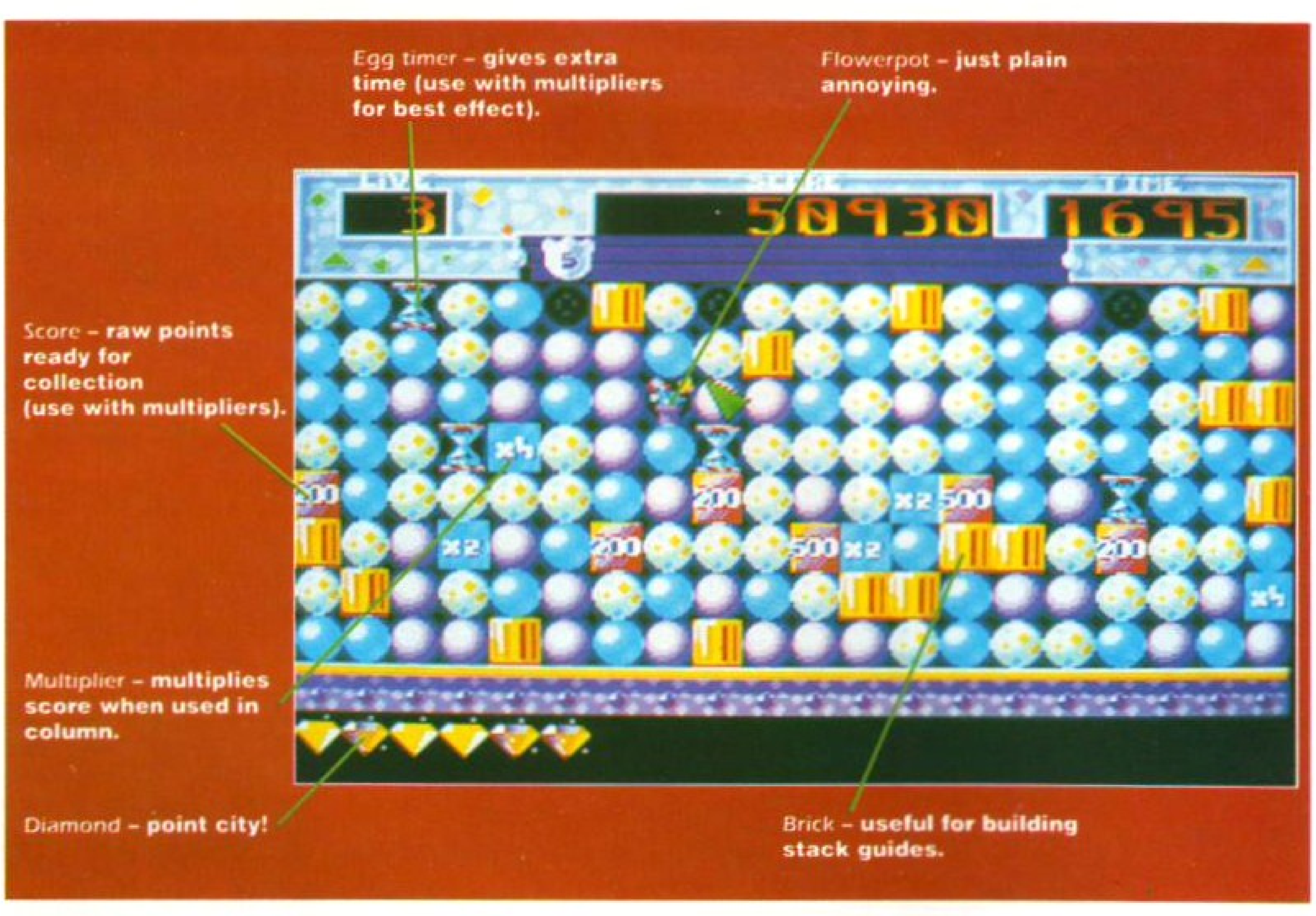
- Fast arcade action is good fun to begin with.
- Inventive two-player mode provides an interesting method of competition.
- 100 increasingly difficult levels will require some playing until the game is completed.
- The colourful graphics are backed up with a superb rendition of Snap's Ooops Up.
- A few annoying quirks make the game frustrating at times.
- Not an especially original idea which unfortunately is a pale imitation of the original game.



It's Kerplunk meets *Tetris*. It's a puzzle game that will have mice squeaking under the pressure and your eyes screaming out for the Optrex. It's another load of balls. It's *Pick 'n' Pile!*

Pick 'n' Pile's the name, piling and picking's the game. Three different coloured balls drop from the skies and the aim is to stack them into similarly hued piles. Everything on screen can be picked with a mouse click and moved into a pile with a second click.

Once they are neatly stacked the balls will disappear, as long as the pile touches the floor and there's nothing blocking the top. Each screen has a set number of balls, blocks and various other bits that drop at the start of the game. You must clear the screen of spheres before the time runs out. So, as soon as it starts to rain down with balls, move the mouse into overdrive and get stacking.



PICK 'N' PILE

UBI Soft ■ £19.99 Mouse

The problem with balls...

The first problem pickers encounter is the balls, being spheres of course they don't just stand around on top of each other but do their darnedest to roll off. If they are to stay in a stack long enough to vanish they must be supported either by other balls or by the building blocks that fell down with the spheres. Using the blocks, chutes can be built which allow faster clearance and enable the maximum points potential to be wrung from each level.

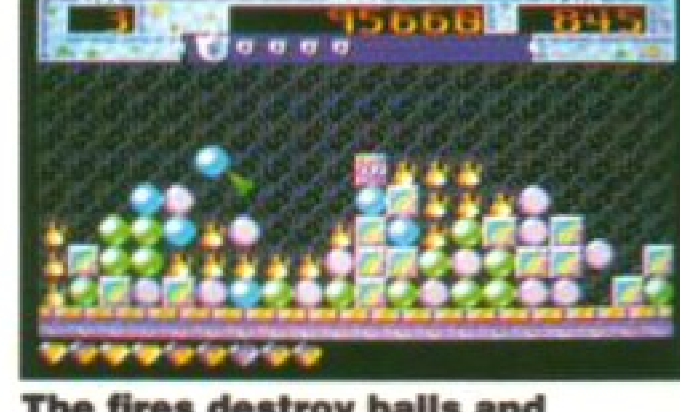
Naturally it wouldn't be much fun just clearing screen after screen of balls, so those cunning French chappies have dreamed up millions of ways to make life sheer hell! Firstly there are flowerpots that refuse to be budged and small fires that grow into stack-stifling infernos. Nastiest of all, though, are the time demons, because when they touch the floor time passes twice as fast as normal – which isn't good news.

Amuse, frustrate and bemuse

Puzzle games are odd beasts, amusing by frustrating and bemusing. Their appeal lies in throwing new, more complex, permutations of the original formula out as the levels progress. Clipping seconds off the time limit is no substitute and yet that is all Pick 'n' Pile seems to offer in the later – nearly impossible – stages.

Diamonds are a game's best friend

On the positive side *P'n'P* is designed to send hi-score freaks mad with points-collecting avarice. Bonus-multiplying wild-card pieces litter the spherical rain, as do fat lumps of pure score just waiting to be collected. Use these well and, as your stack disappears, a diamond replaces it. For every twenty gems collected, players get masses of points and another life. Manipulating the stacks while under pressure from the clock, though, is monstrously tough.



The fires destroy balls and bonuses. They also have a nasty habit of blocking piles (ooer!). These flames spread fast so get picking and start piling.

Screen follows screen, introducing various new nasties plus different designs for both background and balls. Yet there is essentially a lack of variety. Once you have mastered the art of containing time demons and fires, there is only the clock to beat.



The cute little face by the side of the cursor arrow spells trouble. He is a time demon and if he manages to touch the bottom then the rate at which the game clock counts down doubles. There are various strategies to deal with him but the best is to bomb him out of existence. Of course this means you need a bomb, which is exactly what you haven't got on this screen. Ain't life tough!

P'n'P guarantees, initialy, high-speed mouse action as you try to predict what moving a ball from the base of that pile will do for point scoring opportunities. Yet as levels progress it's the clock's miserly nature and the abundance of spheres that make life harder. ***Trenton Webb***

VERDICT

- **Frustrating but challenging. Good variety in the colourful graphics with the backgrounds and balls changing every five levels.**
- **The frantic edge hooks you to begin with, but is frittered away over too many similar levels.**
- **Time limits are used to make life hard, not the gameplay.**
- **Weird sound effects sit comfortably with such an abstract concept.**



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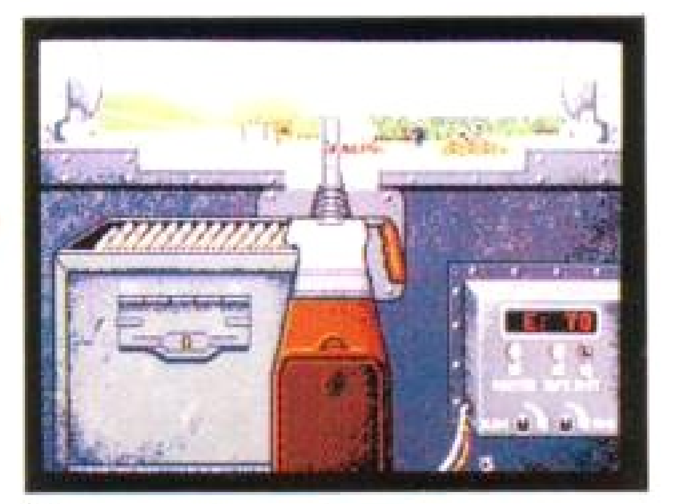


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Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the game play and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specifications.

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UBI Soft £24.99 ■ Joystick



Kicking the lady in the white undies won't help you much but it's jolly good fun. Before kicking anyone, make sure you have taken all the information possible out of them.To do this use the icon system which pops up at the bottom of the screen every time you hold the fire button down longer than 2.5 seconds.

It was in a land, long, long ago, in a time where evil dragons roamed the countryside, spreading terror wherever their dark shadows carried them, when bold, dashing knights rescued fair maidens by the dozen. Remember it? Well, this game is nothing like that. So before we go any further I must issue a public warning: do not read on if you get easily offended or if you haven't seen at least one episode of *Brookside*.

Blue Lipstick

You take on the role of Ranx, a cybergenetic organism. He is a big lad with a rather large problem: blue lipstick! Even worse though, the world is becoming more and more unstable as fushia sickness and psychoplague are ravaging towns and cities, claiming victim after victim. There is no known vaccine to this cruel malady. In the White House there is total panic, because this strange illness has claimed a new victim, none other than the President of the United States of America.

Your mission will take you from Rome to New York, along the way punching camp looking men in leather suits, killing friends and tossing grenades as you go, all with no apparent connection to the plot. If this sounds good heartless fun, that's because it is. Everybody can be hit or kicked, even the small dogs who foul the pavement. This is how Ranx tries to save the world, travelling to various locations, questioning people who may know a cure for this sickness that's causing the world's population to sprout purple spots and then die.



Ranx: "A *Sunday Sport* please." Lady at counter: "That will be five ECUs please." Ranx: "But I have no cash." Lady at counter:"Well then naff off if you have no money." No money, no paper, go and punch a parking-meter.

Comic Element

The graphics are colourful and do their job, with a strong comics' element obvious immediately. Ladies of dubious profession strike out with whips if annoyed, while the old granny clubs you with her walking stick if you try to rearrange her bone structure. The comics emulated, though, are the adult French brand not the Dandy. The sprites are large and move reasonably well across the scenery but the scrolling is poor, jerking along at the end of each screen.

The sound, on the other hand is excellent, with an unusual guitar tune during the intro and in the game's sound effects, the best of these include: smashing windows, cars driving off, people getting thumped-up by Ranx and a wonderful chainsaw buzz. The best of them all by far, though, comes into play when you enter a hotel or a subway, because the street and outside noises continue at a lower volume. This creates a real sense of atmosphere that is lacking in so many adventures these days.



Oh dear Ranx seems to have run out of energy, could it have been because of the nasty man on the roof with the black machine-gun? If it was then a few grenades are called for. These can be found in little brown boxes in various locations around the playing area.

Ranx, has about as much lasting interest potential as an ice-cream parlour at the North Pole. Its easy to control with three core attacks: punch, high-kick and low-kick. One move usually kills most opponents. These limits impose a greater burden on the menu-style 'action' driver. This is tricky to use and offers few modes of true responses outside those preset in the games structure. So you either follow the totally correct route or you get nowhere. Nothing, save the plot, can be discovered about the world which the curious android character inhabits, which is a pity as there seems obvious scope for some blatant silliness.

Martin Tompkins

VERDICT

- **Outrageous, adult, comic humour that will amuse or offend depending on sensibility.**
- **Brilliant use of background sound.**
- **Average sprites, bad scrolling and irritatingly limited icon system.**
- **A long adventure with too many similar scenes to hold the attention.**
- **Beat-em-section features too few fighting moves.**





The first thing to do on this screen is get the three red circles together, so drop the first one on the grey pentagon to the left of the moving block.



Now protect the red circle by placing the black square over it.



Pull the next red circle off the moving platform (being careful not to let it go down past the other circle) over the square to make the three.

PUZZNIC

Ocean £24.99 ■ Joystick

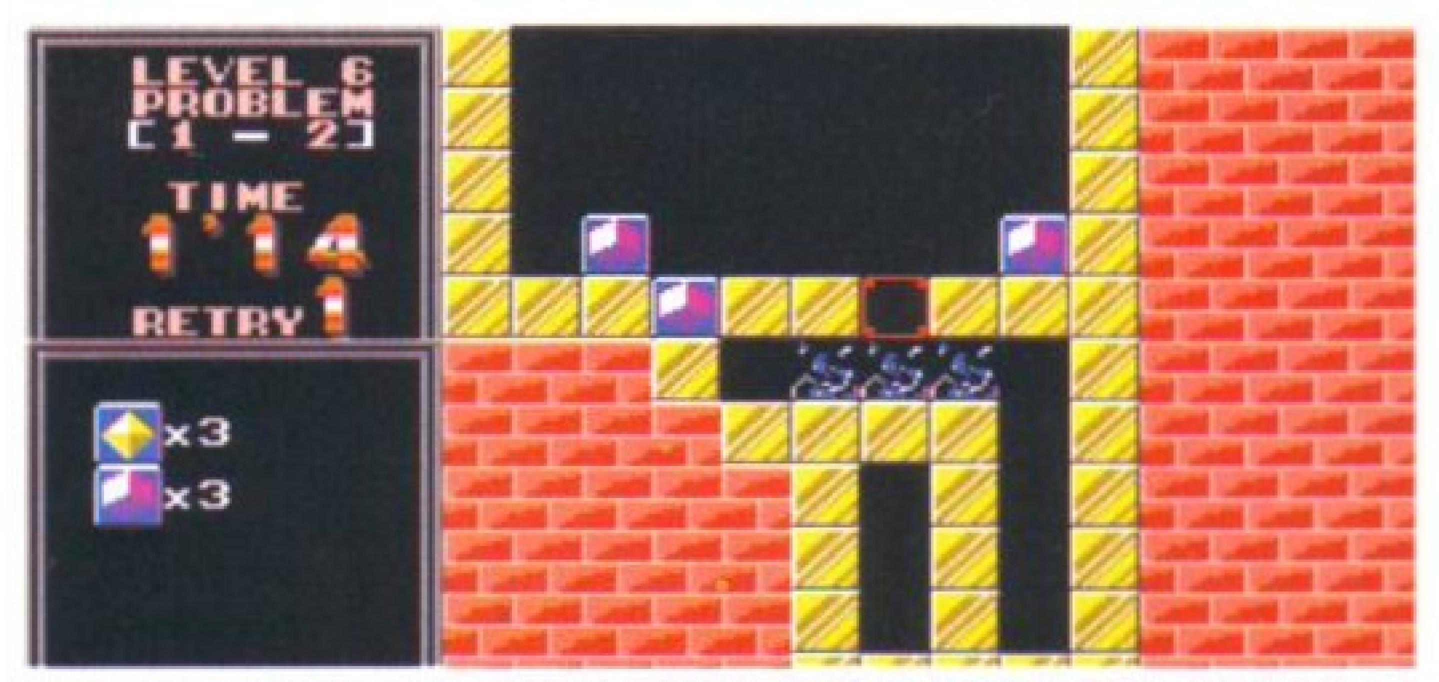
After their conversion of the cutesy-arcade puzzle game *Plotting*, Ocean have released an Amiga version of another Taito coin-op in the form of *Puzznic*. As with most puzzle games there is no plot to speak of – the game is just a straight out-and-out brain-taxer.

New Blocks For The Kids

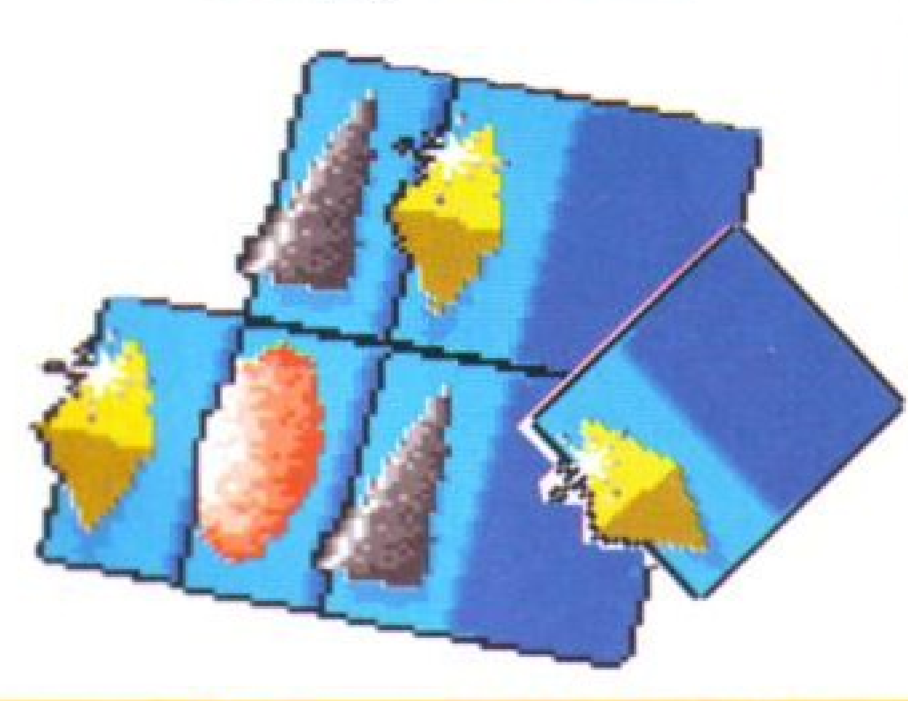
The point of the game is to put together matching blocks so that they explode; they are then removed from the level. This simple idea starts off easily enough, with simple formations consisting of pairs of blocks. All you have to do is slide them together and bingo, a nice clear level. The problems start when you need to destroy blocks of three at a time and work out how to bridge gaps with other blocks. Still with me? No? Well then just follow the example at the top and bottom of the page. ***Maff Evans***



The route planner, where you choose your very own trail to mental torment. Starting at the left you work across the grid following the grey lines. After each completed level you choose between two paths.



How are you going to destroy those last three purples? Don't try to buy time by using pause because all the blocks disappear out of view. If you do mess the level up there is a retry facility, that saves wasting a credit and gives you another crack but doesn't restart the clock.

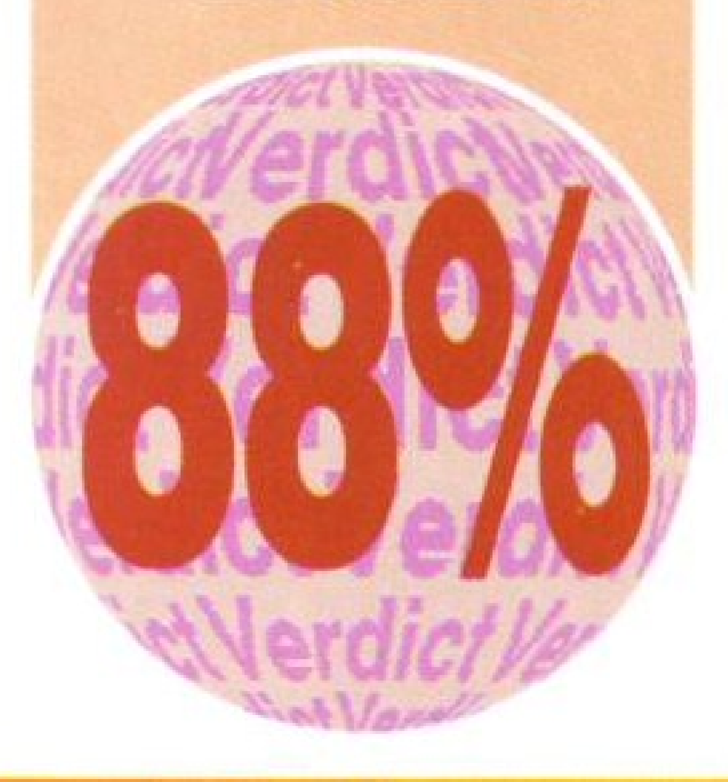


PUZZNIC - THE CHALLENGE

We thought it would be a good idea to get some real celebrities to have a play-off of this challenging puzzle game. So who would be the most apt people to ask? We invited the renowned genius Albert Einstein and master cubist Pablo Picasso to test their abilities at block manoeuvring. Unfortunately, it appears that they're both dead, so that's that sketch knackered.

VERDICT

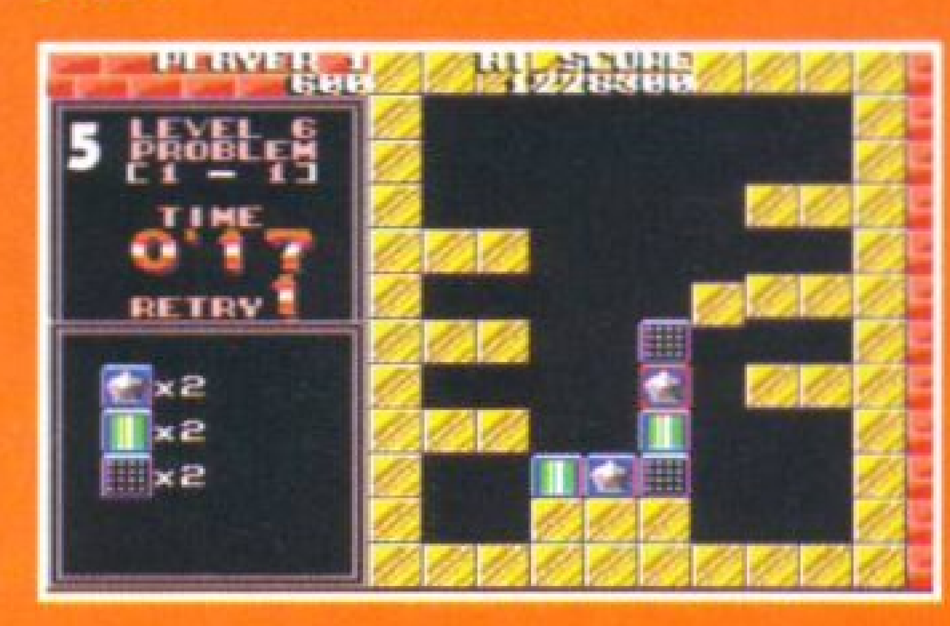
- The puzzles start off easy enough to get you into the game, but soon get more difficult, requiring you to use all your brain power.
- The presentation is bright and cheery, capturing the colourful look and jaunty sound of the coin-op to a tee.
- Completing each task is a challenge, but there aren't really enough levels to keep you interested for too long.
- Simple and addictive. Gameplay is great fun while it lasts, but the fact that the appeal may drop off means that *Puzznic* just misses a *Format Gold*.



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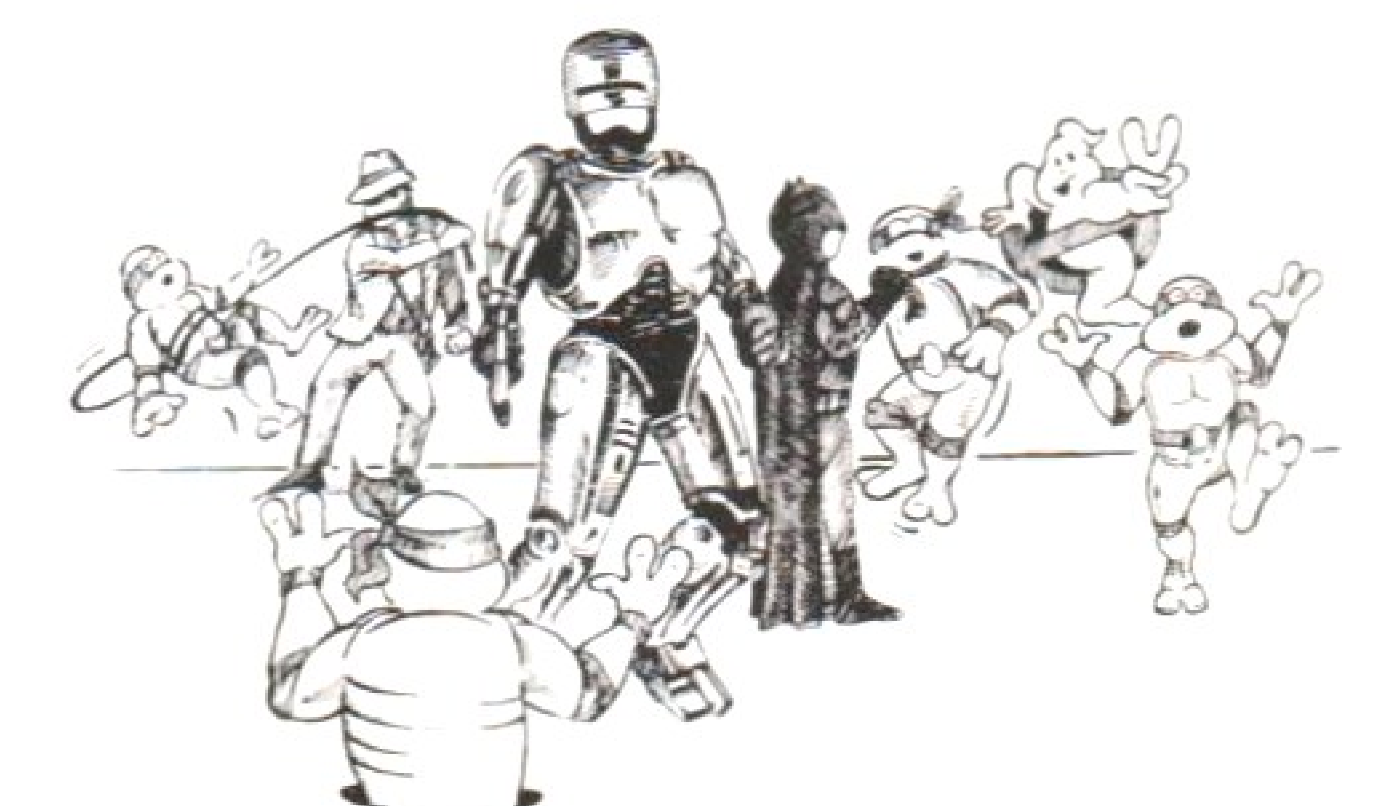
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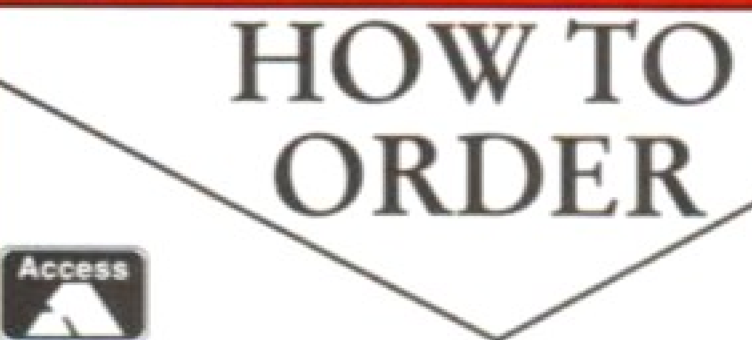
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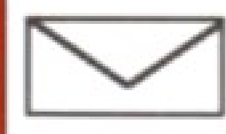


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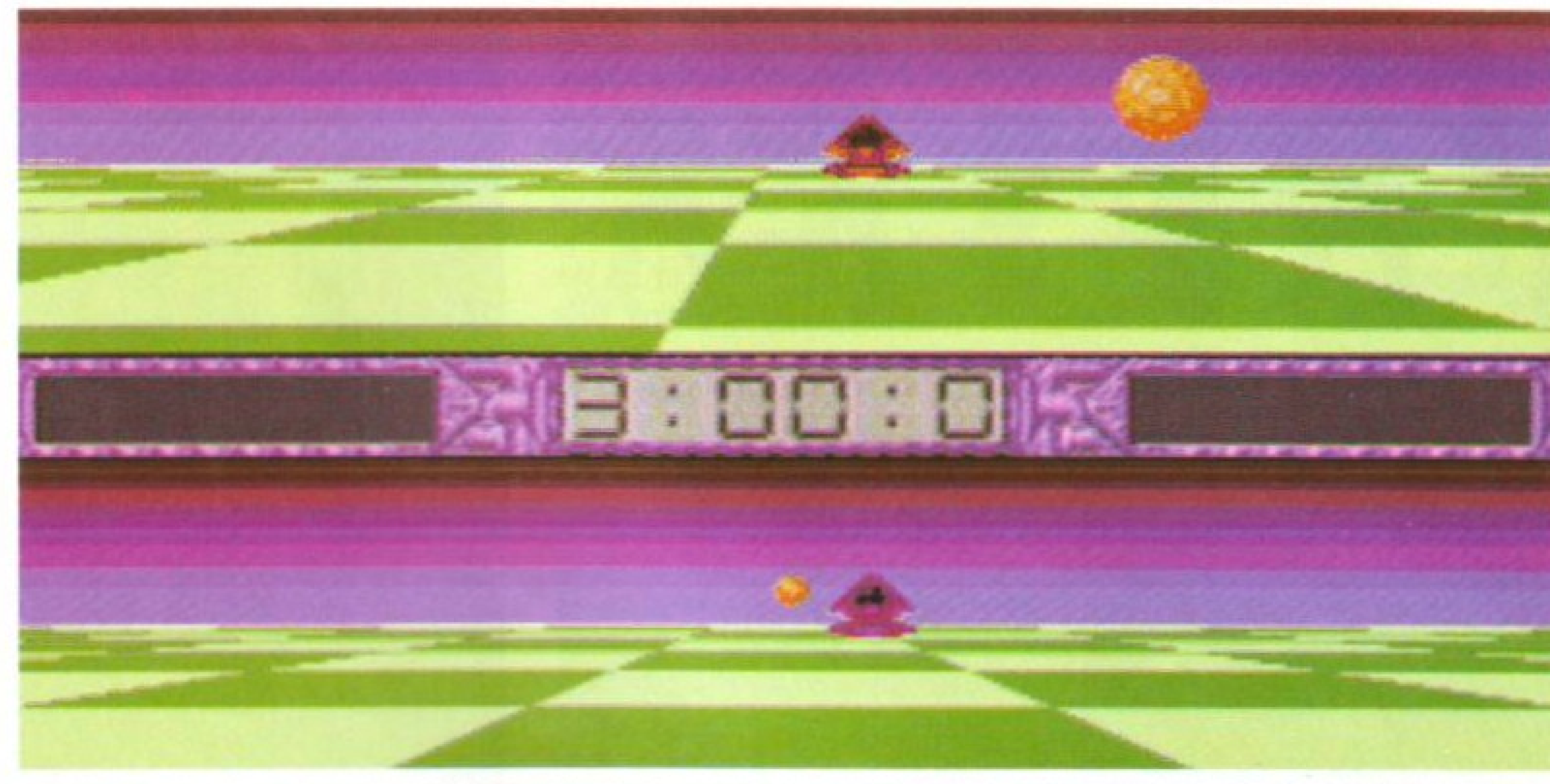
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A few years ago, a strange future sport game appeared on the 8-bit machines called *Ballblazer*. The game won a huge amount of critical acclaim and went on to become a huge success.

The game is based around an inter-galactic competition which takes place in a specially created arena built on an asteroid.

Each match is between two players driving 'rotofoil' craft, either human or computer-controlled, on a large, fast-moving, checkered playing field. At either end of the pitch is a pair of 'goalbeams' which move across the width of the pitch. The idea is to catch and fire the hovering ball (or 'plasmorb') between the goalbeams. A goal scores one, two or three points depending on the distance of the shot. The challenge is to achieve a 'shut-out', that is beat your opponent ten points to nil before the timer runs out.



Kick off! Both the players head in for the ball and player one (top half of the screen) gets there first. If they can get past player two (bottom of screen) then the goalposts should be straight ahead. A quick shot should send the ball flying scorewards. If the ball goes in from this distance then the goal is worth three points. If you're a real wimp and dribble it to the mouth of the score zone then it is only worth one point. Are the extra points worth the risk of losing the ball with a long range blast, or is it better playing safe.

MASTERBLAZER

Rainbow Arts £24.99 ■ Joystick

Matches can either be played as a one-off, or as a tournament comprising of eight players, any number of which can be human or computer-controlled.

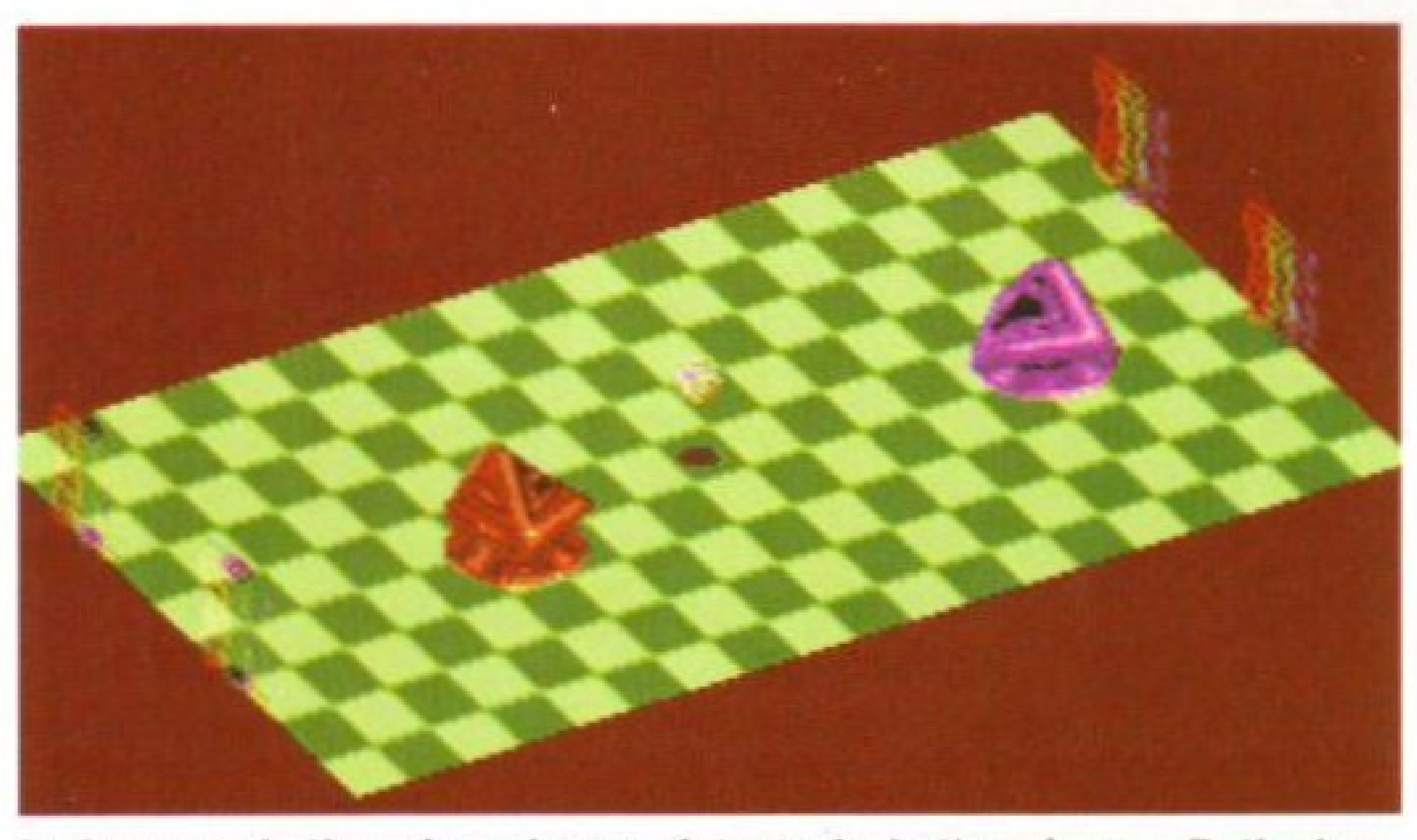
Match of the Century

The gameplay is simple once you've got used to the strange movement of the rotofoils (they snap at 90 degree intervals to face the ball), and once you get stuck in, it's quite an enthralling sport. If you start off by playing the lower-level droids, then you will soon be able to score a quick shut-out, but move up to a droid-nine opponent and the challenge is much more heated. But even if you get tired of the standard game, then you can go for a straight speed test. This section has you racing another rotofoil along a track littered with sets of beams and plasmorbs, the idea being to inflict ten points of damage on your opponent. The goalbeams restore lost energy and the balls slow your craft down, damaging the hull on impact.

If you manage to score a shut-out in record time against a level-nine droid, then you can put your name up into the highest ranking Masterblazers of all time.

Masterblazer is an example of a classic that has aged and travelled well onto the Amiga.

Maff Evans



In demo mode there is a clearer picture of what's going on. Both players face towards goal and must out manoeuvre their opponent for a sight of those plasma goal posts. Unfortunately the posts move which makes rather more awkward than it really ought to be.

THE MASTERBLAZER SECTIONS

SINGLE MATCH - Play a single head-to-head match against a human or any level droid.

TOURNAMENT - Up to eight players can take place in a knock-out competition.

PLAYER DATA - For tech-heads, here are the statistics on the game equipment.



RACE - Run a bump 'n' smash race against a single opponent.

RANKINGS - Gives access to the Masterblazer hall of fame.

DEMO - A brief explanation of the game and the equipment.

VERDICT

- **Super-fast moving graphics and well produced sound give the game an impressive appearance.**
- **The simple gameplay is easy to get into, but difficult to master.**
- **The tournament option allows you to bring in friends and play a highly-competitive contest.**
- **The additional race game gives you the chance to take a break from the main game and burn off energy by smashing your opponent. Yah!**
- **A superb example of how to update and improve an old 8-bit game.**



Nuke 'em high, has taken on a whole new meaning. Someone is peddling a new designer drug on the streets of Detroit, known as Nuke, it is a narcotic so addictive that it makes crack look like sherbet. Luckily, for all those citizens of the Big D who don't like injecting chemicals straight into their jugular, Robocop is on the case.

Tin Head has found out where the evil drug lord and total nutter Cain is based. Level one sees Robo' bashing his way into the drug factory, confiscating Nuke and liberating hostages while he's about it. This takes the form familiar to *Robocop I* fans, with the action seen from the side. Later levels centre on target ranges and puzzles. The game follows the plot of the film, covering Robocop's memory loss, memory retrieval and final showdown with Cain – the drug-pushers brain now having been transferred into a mutated ED 209 battlechasis – who has become known as *Robocop 2*.

Nuke Kids on the Block

Meanwhile, back at the factory, life is getting heavy. Robocop moves the way a robot should – slowly. Which is very authentic but dangerous. He can walk, crouch and fire, swinging his arm around to shoot in five different directions – he cannot shoot straight down however. Jumping between platforms and onto lifts is more difficult than it would be with a human sprite. It seems OCP could only find a set of diagonally-jumping motors when they knocked Robocop together. If Robo' wants to trash something directly in front of him then he can punch, but if, for some reason, a hostage is standing next to him shooting is ill advised.

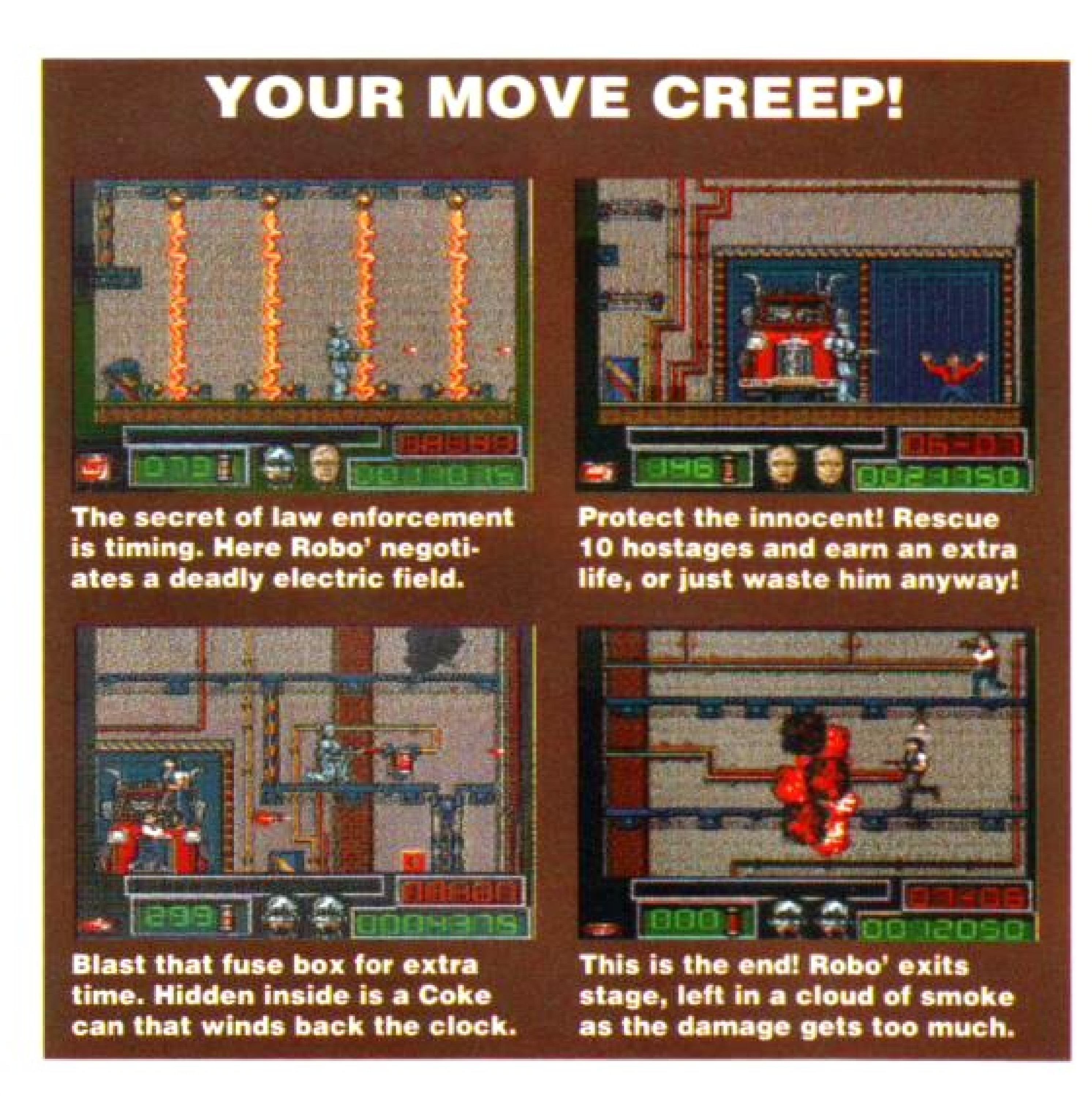
As the Man-in-the-Can powers through the 'side on levels' power-ups pop out of the scenery and drop from the sky. Bashing *Coke* machines generally earns Robocop a can of refreshing, health-giving, pop – that doesn't look at all like 'the real thing'. By shooting fuse boxes the iron-clad lawman receives canisters of Nuke that suspiciously refresh him.

In an interesting twist for part of the first level, picking up *'Coke* cans' is actively discouraged, which is a problem as they fall like rain at this point. As Robo" flies skyward on a hover lift, collecting power-ups throws him off. Negative cans, which reverse motion and lose time, leave him on the lift but take their toll.

Face Death

Robocop is a tough game. The time limits are tight and the enemies are plentiful. Robocop is as vulnerable as ever, with only three lives which are represented by faces. Helmeted Robocops are lives you have left and bare-faced Murphy's show the number of deaths deaths. His energy is represented by another 'Coke' can that gets crushed as his energy is eroded. The diagonal jumping makes life harder than it should be, but they form a constant pattern that is brought into play on the latter stages of level one and the other three 'sideways' levels, allowing him to change direction whilst he is in flight.

The graphics for *Robocop 2* are yards, nay miles, better than they were in *Robo' 1*. Here he's large, mean and metallic. The supporting cast have a familiar look about them. The foes are reminiscent of *Batman* in their behaviour, while *Midnight Resistance* overtones keep popping up. This isn't



YOUR MOVE CREEP!

The secret of law enforcement is timing. Here Robo' negotiates a deadly electric field.

Protect the innocent! Rescue 10 hostages and earn an extra life, or just waste him anyway!

Blast that fuse box for extra time. Hidden inside is a Coke can that winds back the clock.

This is the end! Robo' exits stage, left in a cloud of smoke as the damage gets too much.



OCEAN £24.99 ■ Joystick

necessarily a bad thing as they are better looking than ever before, with more deadly moves.

Robocop Re-mix

A remixed movie tune accompanies the game and in the heat of battle some hefty explosions are let rip. The relentless regeneration of enemies and the range of firepower-ups on offer (five-way scatter guns, three-way shots) guarantees that there is no let-up on the noise front.

A powerful movie conversion. Robocop 2 does though, exhibit some really annoying traits. The lack of restart points is highly frustrating, so too is his insistence on staying crouched until told otherwise. Worse still, on the sideways shoot-out levels, the rate at which the criminals regenerate is sickening. Robocop struggles from can to can eeking out his energy, but the villains are replaced almost instantly. Logically Robocop should suffer no damage from touching

Robocop makes his entrance. Gun-spinning and ready for action. Which is just as well, because...

A canister of Nuke is revealed as one of Robocop's stray bullets hits a crate.

Robocop is attacked from above. Luckily our tin hero can fire in five directions, including up!

Despite his armoured exterior Robo' still takes damage if he touches a villain. The fact the perp is blasting him in the back doesn't help either.

A hostage cries for help. Robo' can rescue him by touching the poor chap, besides the Coke machine contains a tin of energy.

To reach the upper level Robocop will need to use the lift, leaving himself exposed to enemy fire.

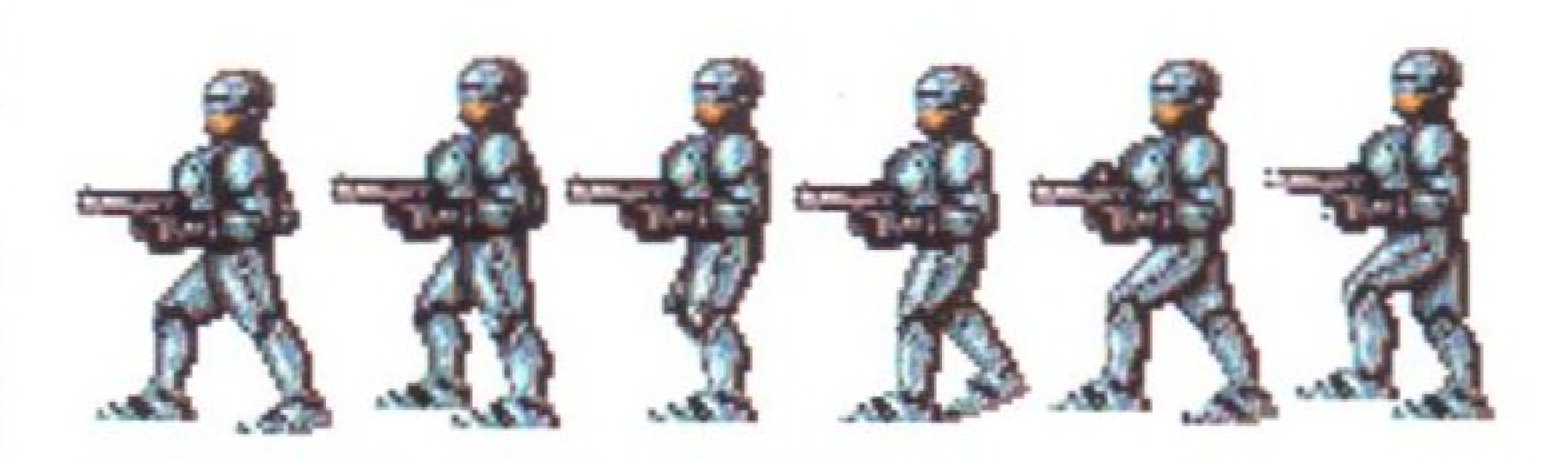
felons, if anything they should die. Yet despite his ultra-tough metal skin, any contact with a criminal loses him considerable amounts of his energy. It may be a computer-game convention, but it doesn't suit the character.

On the Reservations

These reservations aside, *Robocop* is a well thought out and coded game that should only be taken on by hardened walk-and-shoot veterans. The graphics are full of character and capture the dark, moody atmosphere of the movie, especially when the shooting starts. The structure, unfortunately, is slightly predictable, following very much the same pattern as *Batman* and *Robocop 1*, but then all three movies were remarkably similar too and software houses can only work with the material they are given, which is the problem with a licenced project.

Ocean have a sure-fire hit on their hands here. The game could stand up and be counted without the benefit of the licence which simply hammers home the game's good points. Fans of the film will not be displeased, as *Robocop* is littered with digitised stills and Robo-samples. Other players will have fun blasting and bashing the criminals on the streets of Detroit too. Ultimately however, the twitchy controls and other minor gripes combine to rob *Robocop* of the classic game mantle, reducing it to the status of merely good. This fact is made all the more annoying because it has obviously plenty of potential that is just simply not realised, which is a shame.

Trenton Webb



VERDICT

- Graphics capture the feel of the movie.
- Regenerating villains are monumentally annoying.
- A touch formula in overall game design?
- Sound effects and music are excellent.
- Twitchy controls rob *Robo'* of classic status.







ROBOCOP 2: A LAWMAN'S LIFE IS NOT A QUIET ONE.

A compound shot of the first level. This illustrates how much firepower is ranged against the world's hardest lawman. 10 screens in and already he will have rescued 2 hostages and retrieved 2 cans of the designer drug Nuke.





After being hit by a power-up the 'Metal'politan' policeman falls to the base of the hover-lift section. He can still shoot and score points, but valuable time and energy are lost. He'll now have to remount the lift and start the climb one more time.

As Robocop flies skyward power-ups rain down from the ceiling. These must be dodged, because although beneficial, they send him falling back to Earth. 'power-downs' leave him on the platform but have their proper effect: time loss and reverse control.

Floating on the hover lift Robocop is a sitting (well standing) duck. The lift travels at a uniform speed but can be directed from left to right. These guys are easy meat though.

You can leap on fire engines to avoid bullets, the villains can do the same. So keep spraying those shots.

Shooting the oil-drum produces another can of Nuke for the collection, which also provides energy.

Another lift, another hostage. To the right however is the hover lift that will carry the lawman upwards and to next set of rooms.



ATF II's control panel contains all the functions you need to carry out your groundstrikes. Using the throttle (far left) to vary your speed and the terrain-following system (TF in the centre) you can fly low and slow towards the target. Enemies are easily spotted on the left-hand map and targets themselves are designated using the on-board database (right). All you need to look out for is the occasional incoming missile.



ATF II

DIGITAL INTEGRATION £24.99 ■ Joystick and Mouse

Two years ago, Digital Integration made their mark with the flight-sim hit *F-16 Combat Pilot*. Now they're back again with a new game, *ATF II*, but unlike its predecessor it's centred around a fictitious aircraft from the 21st century, the Advanced Tactical Fighter.

Your mission is to fly your ATF through a collection of missions, attacking ground, sea and airborne targets until your opponent is vanquished. To make this difficult, the enemy is a real, dynamic force that grows in size as you progress through the game. You may be busy taking hits off him in one area: winning great battles and destroying his resources, only to find in another, at the end of the mission, he has been busy carving up your homelands.

Playing the game is simple. There is little of *F-16 Combat Pilot's* detail and complex systems.



You can select any member of this unlikely assembly as your pilot. Each has an ability level which directly affects the amount of enemy activity you encounter. It's nice to see a woman here, but it's a shame they couldn't find her a uniform with a zip that worked properly.

Top-ish Gun

Instead, you have only the most basic functions: weapons selection, a map, flight readouts and an automatic "Ariadne's Thread" that guides you to your next target.

These systems are easy to get to grips with and require minimal setting-up (with the mouse) leaving you to concentrate on the important job of engaging the enemy. The enemy comes in two distinct forms: fighter planes, which track in from the front or rear and flak, ground-based artillery fire, which blooms up into the sky as you approach the more strategic targets. To fight the planes you need to use the RL (roll) button on the console to flip you up-and-over and VT (vectored-thrust) to jump back behind them.

Normally the danger is increased by the enemy's liberal use of missiles which you must jam (by pressing the Missile Alert button when it flashes). If you can make it through this kind of hassle, the flak is not too much of a problem, as it isn't guided and you can dodge your way through it.

Engage Target

Locking on to targets is another simplification of old *F-16 Combat Pilot* tricks. Providing you have the correct air-to-ground weapon armed, a small square box on the HUD will show you the chances of a hit. When a diamond is overlaid on the box, the missile is locked-on and can be released with a good chance of target destruction. Some targets are better-off just damaged, as your troops will be able to use that location to strengthen your resources, but you have little control over this element of the gameplay.

ATF II uses a combination of 3D-filled vector-graphic techniques (similar to those used in *Falcon*, *F29* and *F-16*) and standard bitmap sprites more common in road-race games. The overall effect is smooth, but not altogether convincing the reason being that you tend to feel a bit constrained by the repetitive attack patterns and the lack of ground detail.

Musically *ATF II* has a really solid, basic theme which is quite exciting in a *Thunderbirds/Top Gunny* sort of way. The effects however do not help to convey the action and thrill of really "being there", and so falls into the standard mode of machine-guns, engine whine and politely rumbling explosions. ***Neil Jackson***

VERDICT

- After the spectacular *F-16 Combat Pilot*, *ATF II* is a bit of a let down.
- It's an airborne version of *OutRun*, with a similar lack of gameplay.
- It's enjoyable for the first few games. Your interest in it will soon wane though.
- Buy it if you enjoyed *Space Harrier*, forget it if *F-16* was your bag.

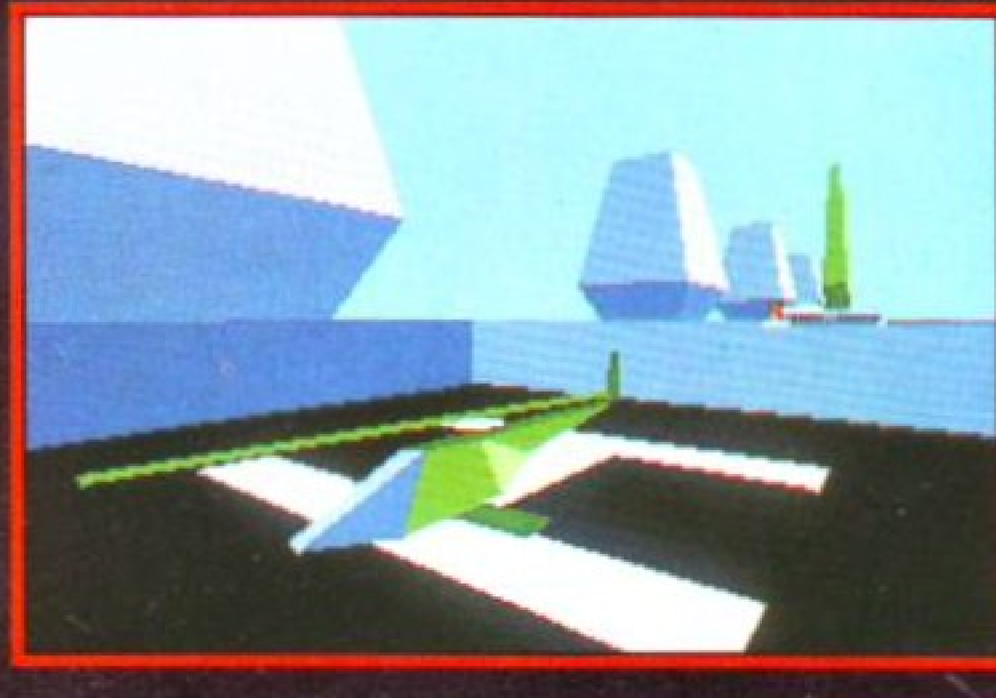


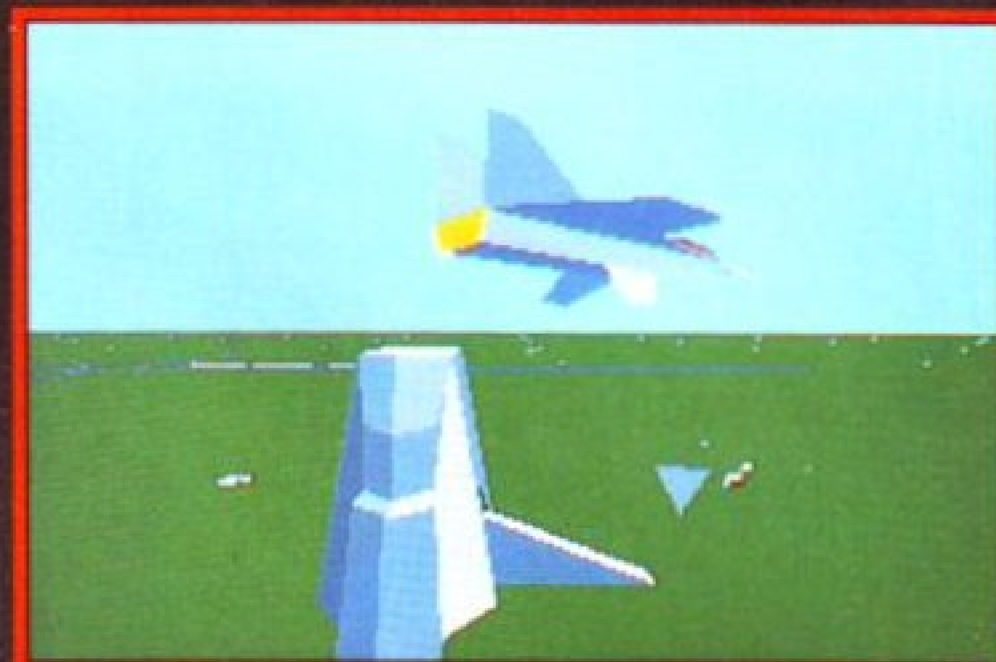


Enemy aircraft tend to approach from similar directions, enabling you to predict the best fire-path for your missiles or cannon. The only toughie is the attack from the rear which forces you to roll over the top and drop down behind the enemy.

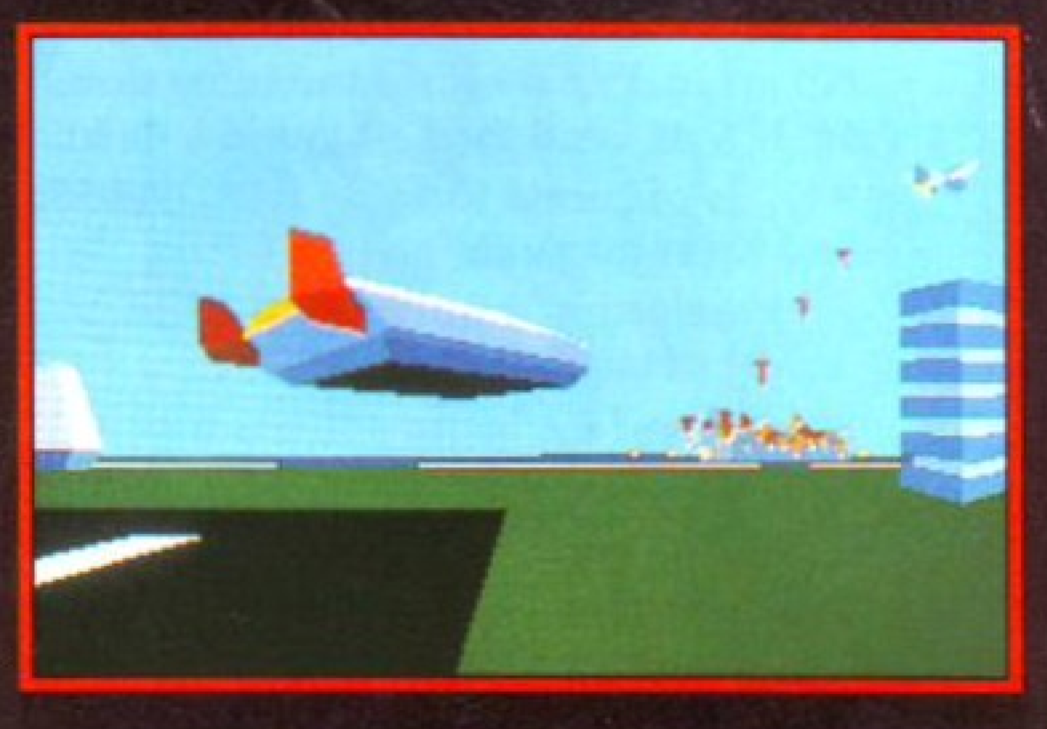


The weapons-loading section is a delightfully animated set piece, which has missiles popping-up from the floor and long bandoliers of shells winding onto the plane. The guy below ought to be sacked though, cos he just sits there and watches telly all day.









ARMOUR-GEDDON

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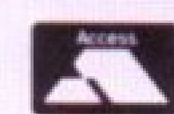
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Screen Shots from the Amiga version.

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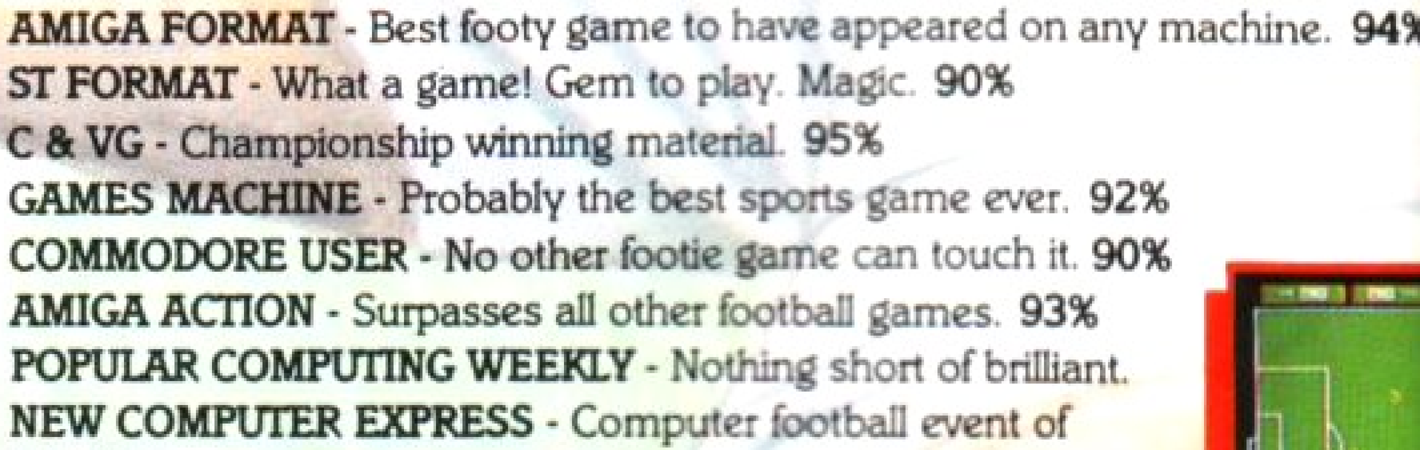
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AMIGA - ST £19.99

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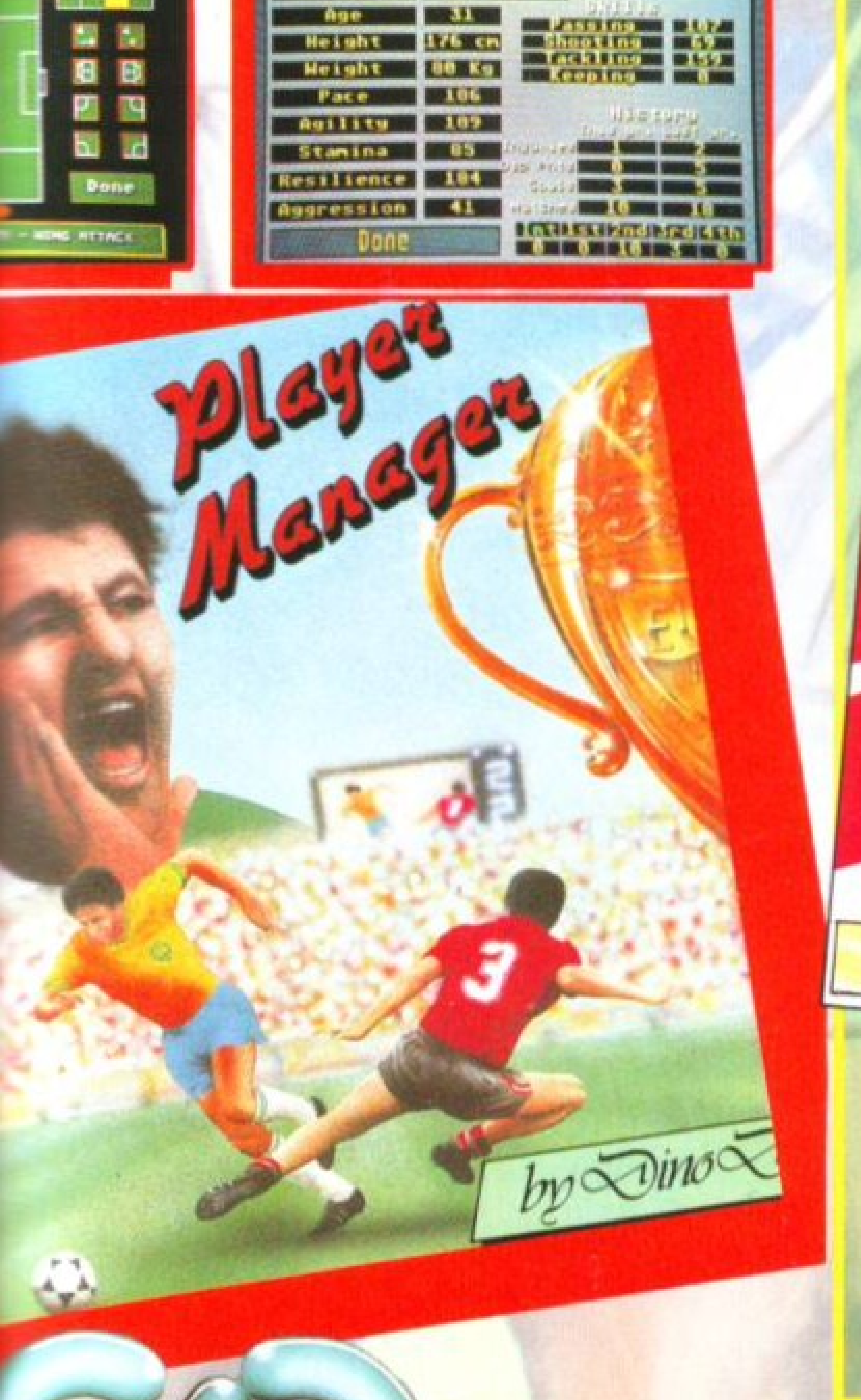
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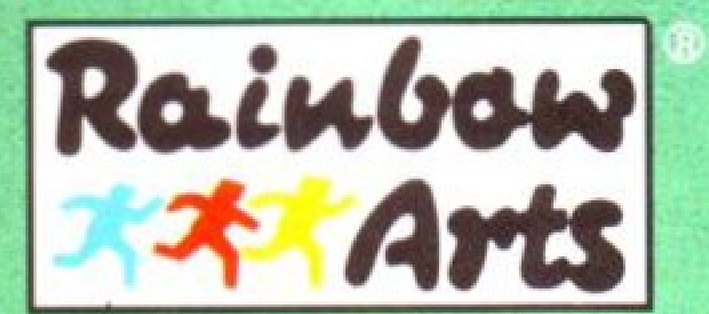


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B.A.T.

UBI SOFT £29.99 ■ Mouse

It's a shame isn't it? There you were resigned to another day or two of quiet relaxation and holographic snooker, when you get the call. It seems some guy on a far-off planet has decided he's going to hold the world to ransom and anyone who argues with him is going to have to go without tea! You work for the "Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters", in fact you're their top agent. Consequently you've been parcelled off to do the dirty on Mr Nasty.

BAT is a graphic adventure. Having said that it's quite unlike any graphic adventure you're likely to have played thus far. The reason for this is the complete reliance on mouse control for getting the game played. *BAT* uses a system called 'active icons' which need little interpretation and are very intuitive. For example, when you need to speak to someone you simply move the icon over the person and it'll change to a speech-bubble. Then you simply click on the right message in the on-screen list and the person will answer… hopefully.







Make the wrong move, question the wrong person or trip over the wrong tentacle and you'll find yourself in very deep water. In *B.A.T.* the main idea is to stop the planet from being stir fried by a mad chap with a large bomb, the sub-idea is to stay alive. That policeman seems to have taken an instant dislike to your face and wants to try a bit of corrective surgery with his Uzi. Stay and fight or run away… the ultimate decision, of course is yours.

Of Life, Love and Aliens

There are some very weird beings on the planet. What's more you can shoot them, chat with them or even engage in a little rumpy-pumpy. Occasionally someone will pick a fight with you, so you'd better be ready for it when it comes. The fight sequences are a case of picking your weapon and letting loose a few bullets in the person's general direction. You also have the chance to run away… if you see the hills run in completely the opposite direction. You'll receive a similar response when you want to chat to someone. They'll either tell you to go stick your head in a vat of acid or offer you some information – for a price – about Vragnor (that's Mr Nasty) or the city of Merrigo where you're based.

A Very Comic Scenario

BAT plays like a comic book. You travel around the world by moving the mouse pointer over an entrance or a street. If you can enter somewhere or plod down a road an arrow will appear and you simply click on it. Another window will then open up, showing the scene you're now in. Sometimes you might have four scenes on screen at once, so you really get a feel of having gone somewhere.

When you need to use a machine or perform an action on someone or something, a different icon will appear. For example at certain points you'll need to use the videophone. To do this you click on the machine, insert your credits card and type in the number. If you've dialled correctly a face will appear and you can engage in a little conversation with them. All you do to eat is head for the nearest fast food joint, insert your card and choose your meal.

B.O.B. You're a Fine Strap 'Oh Me Lad

Don't get the impression that your in this strange land on your own. Nope, you have a nice little trick up your sleeve – literally – who goes by the name of BOB.

BOB is a computer, sorry he's a Bidirectional Organic Bioputer who's built into your arm. He can do a lot of tasty tricks which prove to be extremely useful. For example he can slow down your heart-beat when you're sleeping so you get a nice rest. If you don't understand the aliens then slip your BOB into translation mode and he'll interpret for you. You can also program BOB, for example you can have him detect when there's a killer droid in the vicinity, whilst stepping up your heart-beat to something close to a vein-busting, adrenaline-pumping rate.



Welcome to the Astroport. Here you can pick up a few duty frees, or some fruity trees. It's also one of the main termini for disembarking assassins, so watch your back!



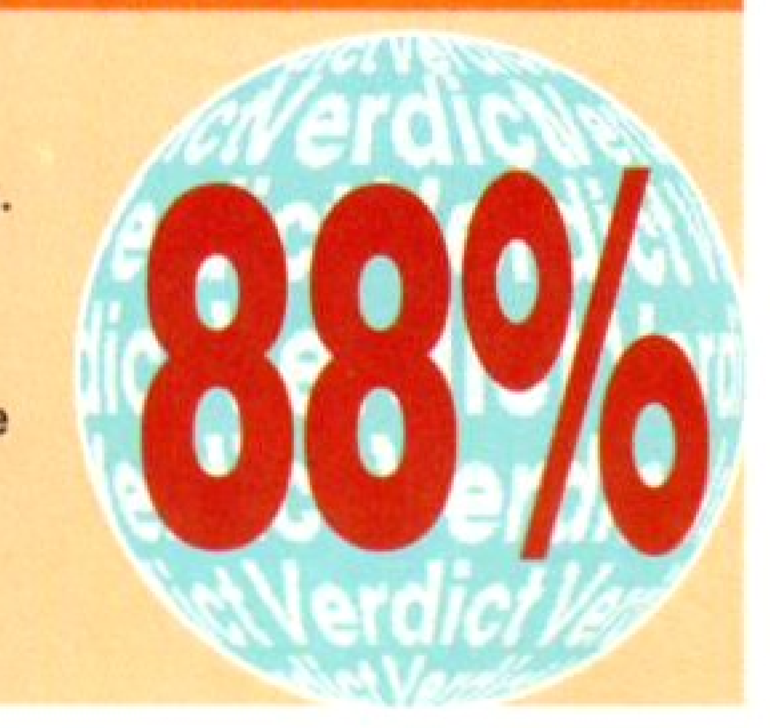
The first place you've got to head for is the bogs. Not because your flight was really long and you feel certain urges, but because there's a geezer in there with all your weaponry.

It's Well Wicked Man

BAT is great. It's very easy to get wrapped up in the game and start to annoy the citizens of Selenia. One of the best features, though, is the fact that there's no set route through the game. You can deduce, stumble on and wring all and sundry out of people, clues about what's happening with Vragnor. ***Andy Hutchinson***

VERDICT

- *BAT* would make a welcome addition to any Amiga gamester's library.
- It would suit adventurers just as much as shoot-em-up fetishists.
- Gameplay is easy and the plot interesting.
- More fun than a really, really fun thing.



STREET HOCKEY

Gonzo Games £24.99 ■ Joystick

Life's tough being brought up on the streets. No friends, no toys, no entertainment. So, to get out of the rut, what do you do? You join a gang, strap on some serious protection, arm yourself with a pair of steel roller-boots and a large stick, and go and play hockey.

Street Hockey has five players on each side. A goalie, two defenders and two attackers (or forwards, if you want to be genteel). Speed is of the essence in the game; the ball can't be knocked out of bounds owing to the concrete sides of the court, so play continues until the time is up. It's so fast, furious and trendy they made a soft-drinks commercial about it.

Sluggish

The speed and action doesn't come across in this game. There are a number of plays which you can select. These are similar to American Football tactics. They don't, however, seem to make a great deal of difference and almost seem to use up memory which would be better employed elsewhere. Instead of having exciting pace and hectic gameplay, *Street Hockey* is slow and jerky.

The views of the pitch are not very clear, and the graphics aren't extra-special anyway. But combine this with the sluggishness of the controls and the arthritic screen updates and there isn't a great deal for anyone to get worked into fever pitch about.

The sound is as good as you'd ever want, but doesn't go very far towards redressing the balance. Basically, the game isn't fast, competitive to play, rewarding to watch or particularly exciting. Pity.

James Leach



Seen from behind the goalie's position. Boxes F1-F4 show the views of the other team members. More useful is the centre display, which gives vital (and clear) info on the positions of the players and ball. Note the colour of the polluted sky: New York isn't a healthy city.

MANHATTAN

Yo, dudes (and so forth). If you's gonna be cool at this game, man, you gotta get yo'selves to and from the venues with style. There's sixteen parks downtown, an' yo' team gotta hustle theirselves across the mean streets from one park to another, to play diff'rent teams. It sho' ain't easy, cos there's automobiles an' yeller cabs crawling all over. Git the team to the right park at the right time, an' yo' ain't gonna lose no street cred. Get any one of yo' team hit by a vee-hicle, an' yo' opponents gonna dis you out, man. You's gonna be laughin' stock, and yo' boyz ain't gonna give their all. So jus' do it right, man!

THE VIEW FROM THE STREET

The main display shows the goalkeeper's view. He is the player you are currently controlling. It is possible to let the computer select which player it thinks you should be commanding as the game progresses (á la *Kick Off*).

The selections the computer makes are awful; you don't get to play the team member best positioned for a decent shot, because it will swap to someone else first.

The arrow denotes the position of the ball (usually a crushed soft-drinks can).

Central is the overhead view. This is useful for helping you extricate yourself from the mess the computer has landed you in.

Scores are shown in the bottom left and bottom right of the screen and the clock, counting down, is in the centre, below the overhead display.

Each of the four panels to the sides of the overhead view are the views of the other players on your team. At any time during play you can hit F1 to F4 and switch to one of these players. The only problem is that the displays are too small for you to clearly discern what is happening. Thus switching to another player is largely a matter of getting bored with the current one.



VERDICT

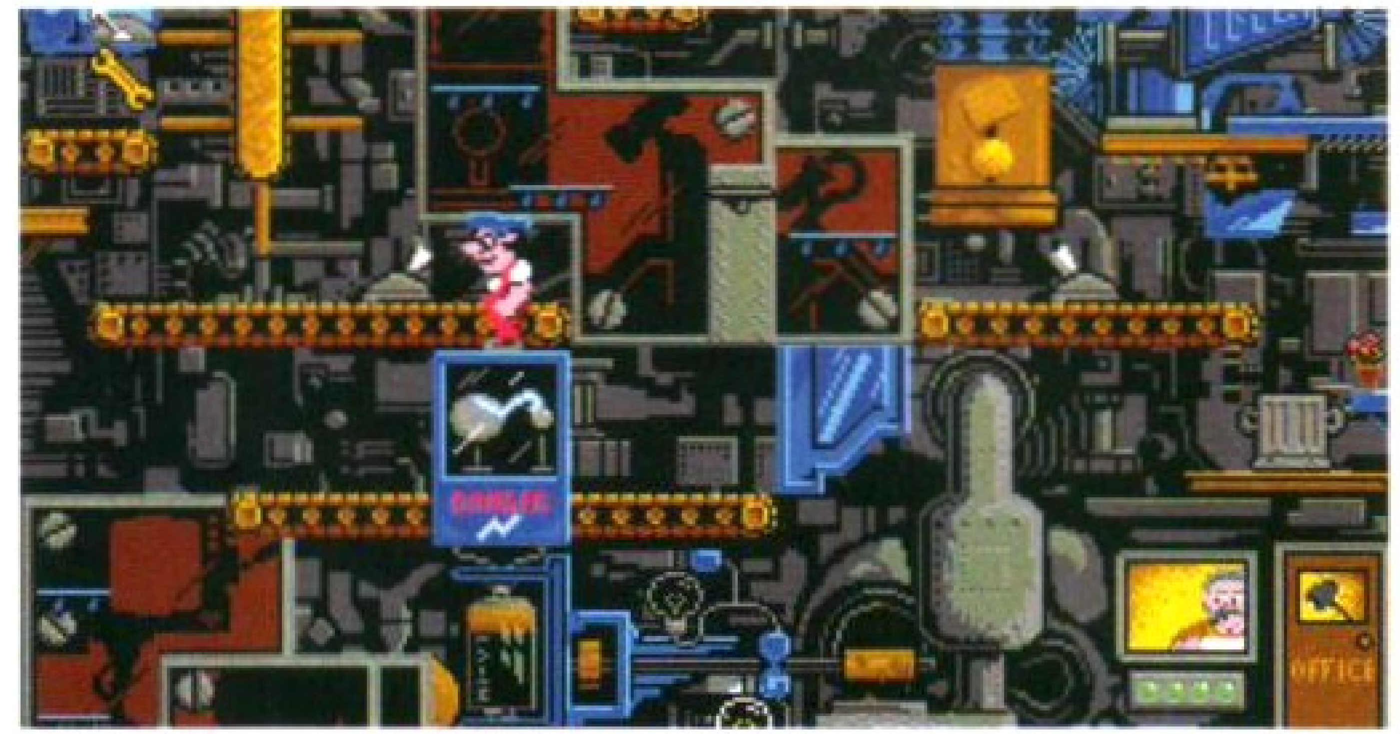
- *Street Hockey* does have some style.
- Toing and froing on the NY streets is largely irrelevant.
- Good attention to detail surrounding the game.
- There isn't enough speed, clarity and gameplay within it.
- Even taking into account you're supposed to be on roller-skates, the controls don't respond very well to joystick movements.
- The computer's choices about who you should be controlling are awful.




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Get a job. An anthem of the Thatcher years, this is the axiom behind the latest Lucasfilm/US Gold tie-up: *Nightshift*. Fred and Fiona Fixit have sent in their applications to the Lucasfilm sound-alike Corporation: Industrial Might and Logic. They want to be part of the production line that churns out all those cute Darth Vader and Storm Troopers dolls.

The Fixit couple are accepted for a trial period and this is where you step into help them. The IML production line is an antiquated



Fred is having a hard day's night-shift, and he's working like a dog. He can try to grab that spanner for use later in the game or charge ahead with tonight's set task. Now does that switch in front of him need changing? To flick it, stand him in front of it and pull down.

NIGHTSHIFT

US GOLD ■ £24.99 ■ Joystick

Heath Robinson affair. All the actual making is done by one huge machine, lovingly known as the Beast. The Fixit's job is to turn the right knobs, throw the right switches, pull the right plugs and repair any broken bits to make the machine produce what it is told. This could be Darths, Troopers or Yodas. Anything Lucasfilmy in fact, even Zak McKracken's.

Fred or Fiona, after being set their evening task by the manager, appear in the heart of the machine. The Beast is in fact little more than one huge series of platforms that the workers leap around to get the machine producing the right sort of toys, assembled in the right order and in the right colour.

Fred'll Fixit

The various functions that the Fixit couple are asked to perform include peddling a bike to get the generator generating, lighting fires to keep the boilers boiling, plugging leaks to stop them leaking and switching switches to make sure that all the toys are conveyed along the right conveyor belts. Otherwise you'll find Darth Vader's with two heads and no bodies, or mixed in colour with blue bodies and red heads. And the IML Corp deal with inefficiency by sacking employees.

The Beast is a glorious piece of graphic invention, a multi-coloured melange of wheels and cogs that interact to create toys. The machine is the heart of the puzzles and therefore the game. You are never told what has to be done in the right order to get the Beast running, it's a matter of trying to fix everything. Then, if a number of toys start to pop out of the top, it's up to you to make sure they get assembled correctly on the way down.

HEART OF THE MACHINE

The machine at the heart of Nightshift's mayhem is known as The Beast. Now you can see why!



The big bubbly burner where all the raw materials are made – keep it hot!

The plug – check you're plugged into what you've paid into.

The switches must be flicked the right way to ensure correct assembly.

Leap about the beast using the platforms – falls costs time.

The assembly bit. The toy components get chucked in here and hopefully come out a complete toy.

Spanner – grab this for some help when fixing the Beast.

The foreman – keeps a hawk-ish eye on your work-rate.

This is where all the toys end up. All the properly made toys are stacked in one bin; mistakes in another.

Kill that Lemming!

Of course everything is far from staid in the world of work, every now and again Cliff or Jodee Lemming leap out and try to sabotage the evenings efforts and must be chased off with hoovers or Venus fly traps. The machine regularly cranks down and the mix-ups get ever more comical as the wrong switches are turned in an attempt to get this show back on the rails.

With a quickly burning candle to represent the time left on that night's shift, this is a game of panicked trail and error, the cuteness hyping the whole affair way past the normal puzzle challenge levels. It's original and totally enjoyable, not at all like a night's work. A factor that is only enhanced with the introduction of humourous and flexible characters who mirror real life working people, ie the Foreman, the lemmings, to a tee.

Trenton Webb



The two characters who you control on-screen. Getting the job is the easy part, it is keeping it once the madness starts that is tough going.

VERDICT

- Graphically intriguing the Beast is brilliantly wacky.
- Characters are full of life and humour.
- Basically a timed puzzle game, disguised under a layer of cartoon fun.
- Takes far too long to load different shifts.
- Destined to be a cult hit, but may be too odd for the mainstream.



Now you've really done it! Whilst cleaning the Grand Wizard's stock of extremely irreplaceable spells, an accidental misspelling has whisked his entire set of prestidigitatory paraphernalia into four different dimensions. He's miffed, the spells are lost, and you are in big trouble.

The way to get all the magical kit back is by personally trekking through four different gods' domains and picking up the spells, scrolls and potions you inadvertently conjured there. The Wizard will keep a telepathic eye on you and allow you to use any magic recovered to defend yourself. He will also resurrect you twice (twice, not once, or three times, but twice) if your unfortunate, and in his eyes, stupid enough to get killed.

Asterix d'Gaul

Mystical is wonderfully French. The characters are straight from the *Asterix* school of animation. With funny, waddly walks, bags of humourous effects and on-screen speech blurbs. The style is fresh, consistent and very original. And it is only after this has been taken in that it becomes obvious that *Mystical* is, plot hyperbole aside, a walking shoot-em-up.

Wander up screen, dodging incoming enemies, your aim is to collect all the potions and scrolls that litter the way. These are reclaimed for the Wizard by wandering over them. These can then either be cast immediately or stored. The spells vary in potency and power, but all help to see off the hordes of bad guys who meander down towards you.

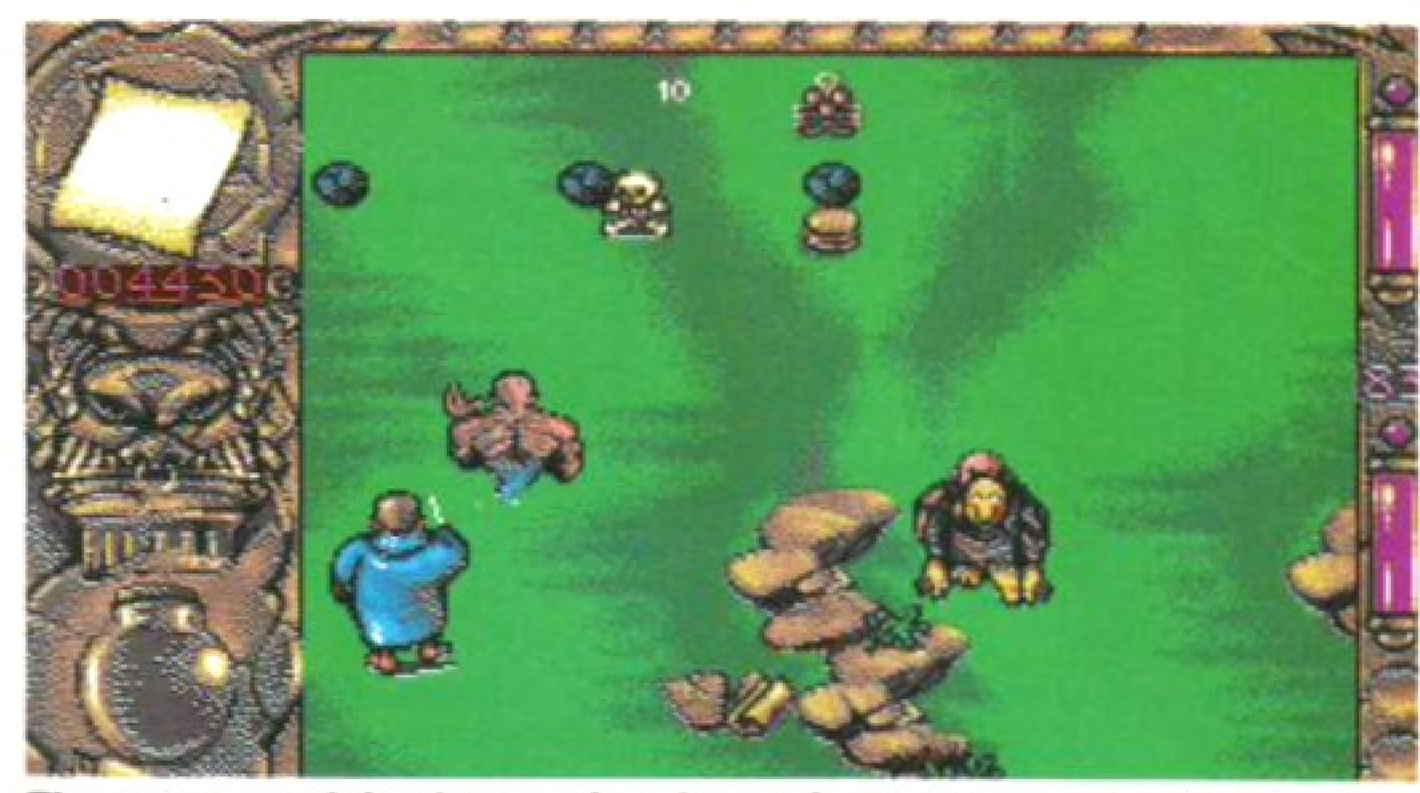
Big Mac, Fries to go?

There's only a small amount of energy per life – which can be restored by eating the hamburgers (!) which are also found en route – and it's diminished by touching an enemy or being hit by missiles. The apprentice has to be kept moving because the enemies actively hunt him down, so you have to control the would-be magician in a suitably unpredictable way.

The game can be played solo by the Wizard's apprentice or with two simultaneous players. The second player takes on the role of a Golem, who doesn't have the ability to cast spells, preferring to jump on enemies to kill them. The Golem role is far less flexible than the apprentice and is definitely the short straw gamewise.

The flexible magic system and the cartoon characters make for a strong game concept, but it's too fiddly. The choice between storing or casting a spell has to be made the second it is retrieved, which forces some heavy space bar tapping – to store the spell – exactly when you want to be dodging.

It is original, but not massively strong. The animations are amusing, but the game really belongs in the shoot-em-up genre, but it is not fast enough to be thrilling. The stored spells are awkward to use under pressure and detract rather than adding to the gameplay. It's is fun, but proves too much hard work to be really enjoyable. ***Trenton Webb***



The young magician has conjured a genie to come to his aid. Possibly the most powerful potion of the lot, the big guy hovers in front of you and hurls rocks at the press of a fire button. Basically a very powerful three-way shot provider, he doesn't hang around for long, doing more damage than any lamp inhabitor should.

MYSTICAL

Infogrames £24.99 ■ Joystick and keyboard

THE REAL THING

Between each stage, of each level, you are given the chance to store some default spells for the next part of the quest.

Fireballs
Vegetalis
Bloody Blades
Fire Wall
Petrification
Ice-Storm
Imprisonment
Earthquake
Metamorphosis
Paralysis
Magic Sword
Weird Signs.
Weird Signs
Multiply Vision x3
Fire Aura
Multiply Vision x2
Buckler of Reflection
improve Fire x3
Lightning
Fear
Vampire Bullets
Poison Cloud
Genius
Improve Fire

These spells, once stored between levels, can be called upon during the next stage. Hit the spacebar to cycle through the spells (the picture appears in the top right-hand window) and then press a key on the number pad to cast it. When going up against an end-of-level (end of each third stage) god, make sure to have all your most powerful magic in the bag.

VERDICT

- *Asterix*-style animation makes for amusing viewing.
- Magic system is too fiddly to implement when under pressure.
- A brave but flawed attempt in marrying cute pics, shoot-em-up formula and magical adventure.
- A pleasant diversion, but not an absorbing game.
- Two Player mode is unbalanced and little fun for the second player.





The Gryphon strikes back! Thunderballs at the ready, the little critter goes all out for victory on the first level. Here the magician Sagyr is trying to battle out of his own castle, which Xandrilla has filled up with creatures of an evil bent. One of the most potent weapons in the game – well it looks good, anyway – this is the basic weapon type. If four more similar power-ups are collected by the magician, then it's time to run and hide if you're a silly yellow octopus, strange sliding worm or any other brand of Xandrilla's horde.

WINGS OF DEATH

THALION £24.99 ■ Joystick

Waking up on a Saturday morning with a thumping head and a mouth that tastes like a hamster's armpit may be usual for people who like their ale. But the Great Mage Sagyr has just arisen to that he has the body of a bat and the breath of a dragon – and he doesn't even drink!

He's been tricked by Xandrilla, an evil witch with a grudge to bear, and is now paying the price. Sagyr has only one choice: fly to Xandrilla's castle and kill her. It will be a hard fight, flying over seven different zones of death and destruction, but it has to be done.

Here endeth the plot for today's shoot-em-up. What follows is in an exercise in high-speed shooting, dodging and blasting. The bat battles through Sagyr's castle, the jungle of mutants, the lethal swamp, the scape of fire, the lands of despair, the crystal world and – eventually! – Xandilla's very own stronghold. Each level has its own particular dangers and its own particular foes.

Free Form – Or Even Five!

Luckily for Sagyr, but not for the creatures he meets, a bat is not the only form he can take. If he shoots all the monsters in one attack wave then a power-up floats free. Collecting it either improves his firepower in the normal shoot-em-uppy kind of way, or transforms him into a different creature with a different kind of weapon. As an insect he can fire small triangular bullets, as a dragon he spits fire, as an eagle he can conjure up an energy whip, when he's a bat he drops balls that split and shower the screen and, finally, as a gryphon he can litter the screen with a hail of thunderballs that smash all the on-screen life to pieces. With each weapon upped and doubled by the collection of similar power-ups, Sagyr's appetite for destruction is insatiable.

The monsters swoop down in predictable patterns, but with numbers on their side. With creatures on the ground and flying the action is hectic, often confusing. The sheer volume of shots makes life visually confusing, but pacy. The size of the sprites contributes to the confusion, as do some of the backgrounds, which either mask shots or enemies. Well drawn and smoothly animated, certainly, but it is not for the faint hearted who will blanch at the on-screen chaos.

The sounds are the weakest links in the *WOD* chain. The effects bang well enough, but with all the explosions and dragon's breath blitzing the screen, some meaty roars and heavier bass would have gone down a treat. It isn't a bad flaw, just a missed opportunity.

This binge of anarchic destruction is fun because it is confusing, but *Wings of Death* has an uneven feel. If you get one of the many power-downs or you die, the latter stages of each level become unbearably hard. The special weapon that has most effect on the big-end beasty will always appear, but your bat, gryphon, dragon or whatever will be in such poor shape as to make it unusable.

Mindless Blast

With small sprites and masses of on-screen enemies, *Wings of Death* favours the intuitive blaster rather than the planned-route followers of the *R-Type* brigade. This makes it fun at the outset but certainly harms long-term play. There is simply too much risk, too much left to chance and too many factors in favour of the enemies. *WOD* is a game which will be dragged out occasionally for a quick whiff of chaos, before you return to more survivable entertainment.

Trenton Webb

VERDICT

- **Joyous shoot-em-up anarchy with masses of on-screen action.**
- **Lacks really meaty sound effects and the digitised speech fails to compensate.**
- **Small sprites and similar shots make survival difficult.**
- **Huge variety of weapons to use and creatures for you to turn into.**
- **Chaotic fun, but relies too heavily on luck.**





In the form of a dragon Sagyr has the advantage of fiery breath. The dragon is powerful but slow. Speed-ups are next on the list if you want to make the most of this incarnation – they look like small wings on the standard black orb.



Size of an eagle! This little birdie employs an energy beam. If you only have one power up it is stationary: bag another and it starts to sweep from side to side like a huge windscreen wiper of destruction. It's dead handy and looks good too!

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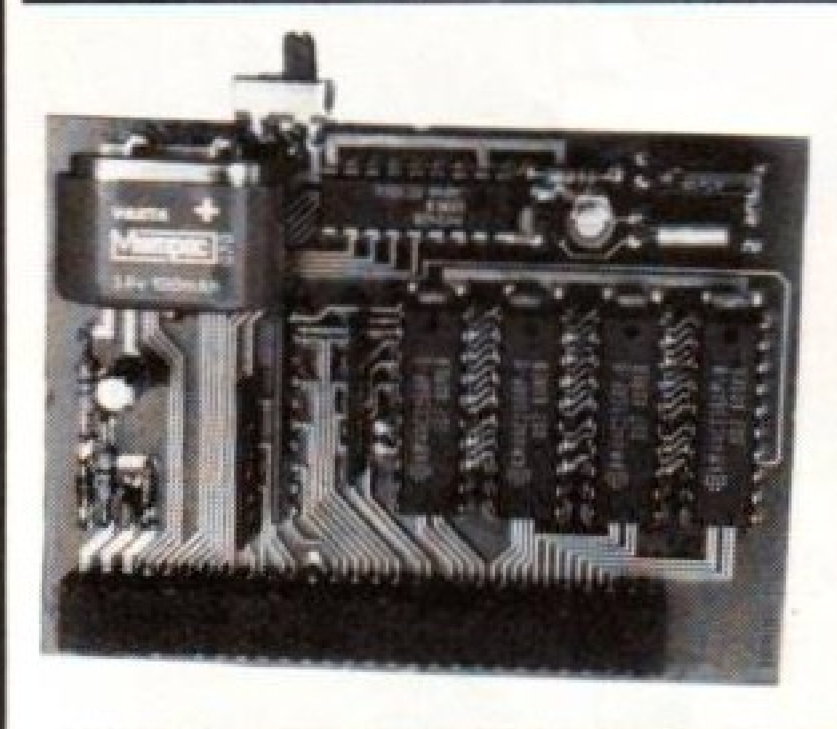
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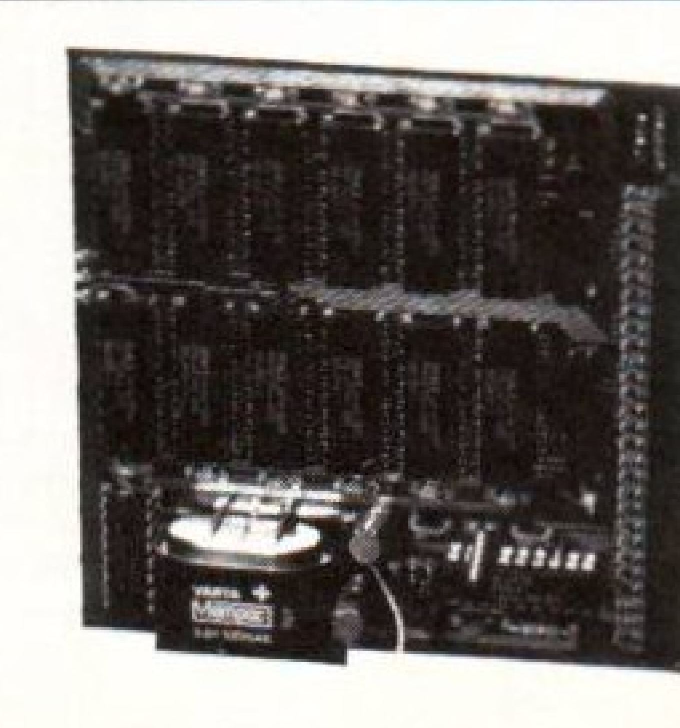
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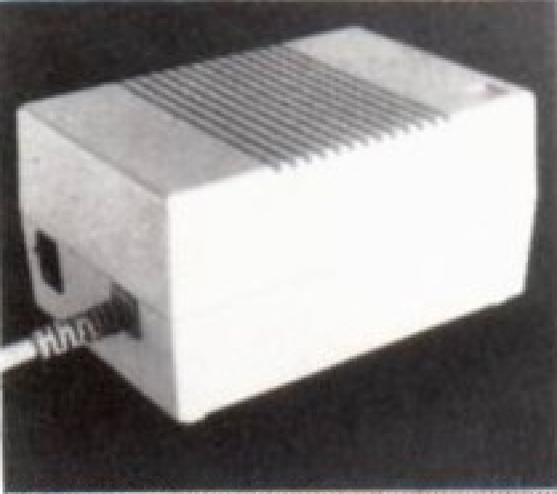
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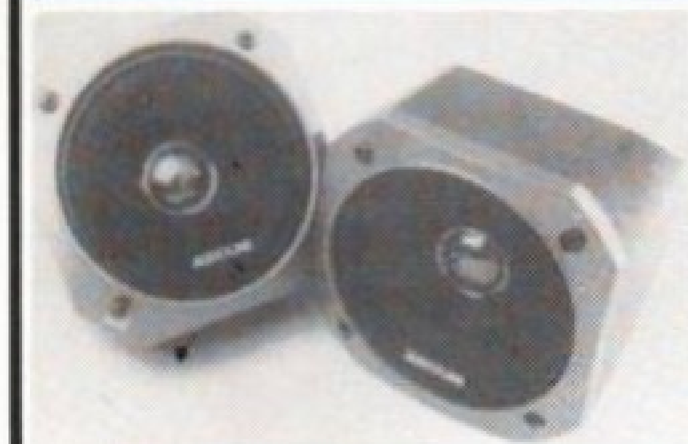
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Amiga 500 512K SCREEN GEMS Pack includes 'Night Breed', 'The Beast 2', 'Back to the Future 2', 'Days of Thunder', 'Deluxe Paint 2' and TV modulator	£379.00
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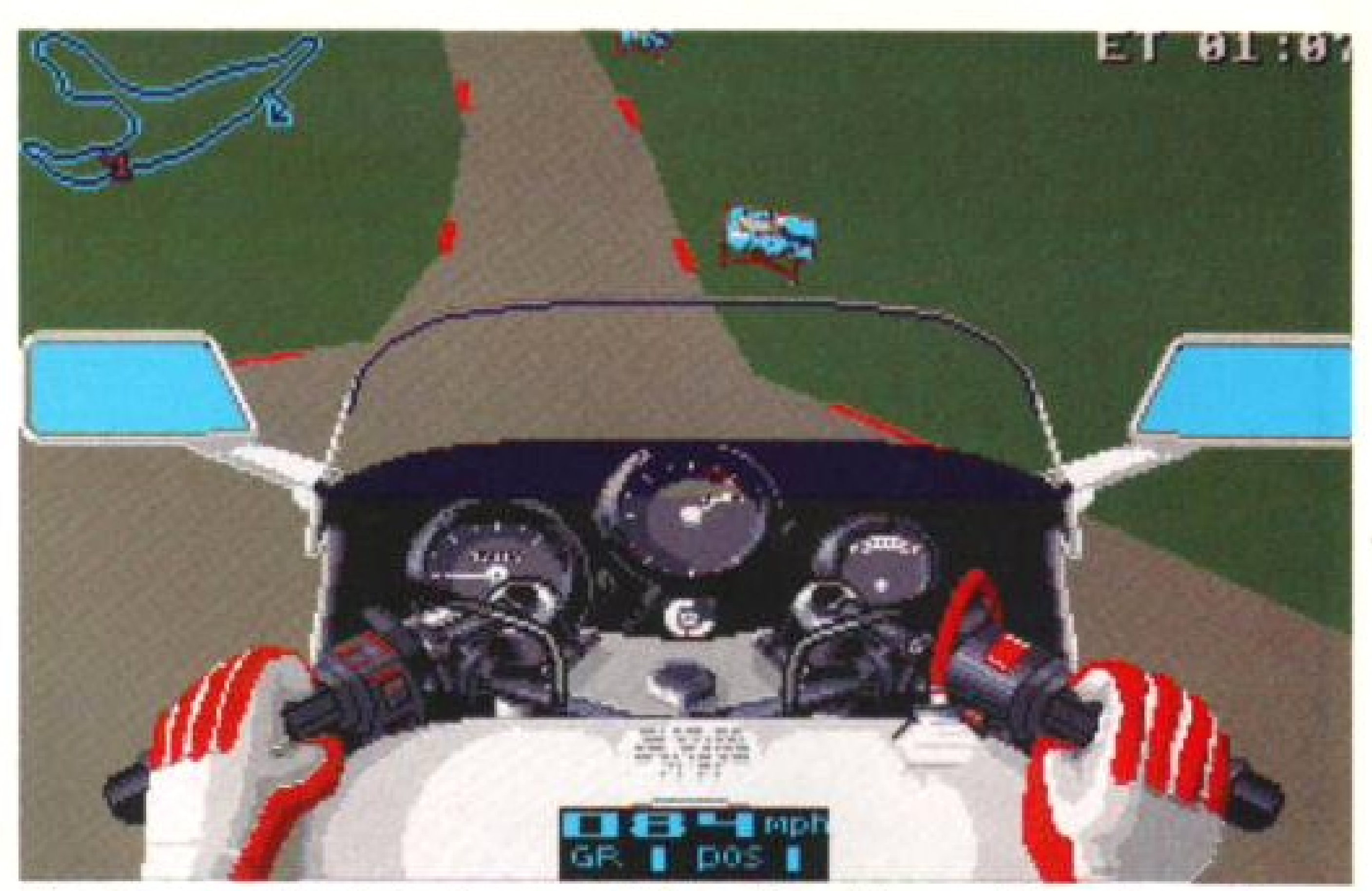
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Spindizzy
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"IT"LL MAKE YOUR HEAD SPIN"
Spindizzy is back! Hanging in space is a cluster of worlds and for each world a different quest awaits. GERALD (a Geographical Environment Reconnaissance and Land-Mapping Device) is all set to explore the solar system, collecting energy crystals scattered around the scrolling 3D environment. You'd better have your Spindizzy skills honed to perfection to escape before the crushing time-limit spells an end to your game-conquering aspirations!
"Will provide you with hours of absorbing entertainment" – ST Format
"It's great. You'd be more than a bit dizzy to miss it!" – The One
GOLD
© 1990 Paul Shirley. Published by Electric Dreams Software Ltd.
Manufactured in the U.K. Fabrique en Grande Bretagne


Having qualified poorly you tend to get placed at the back of the field. Notice the lap-counter in the distance, when it reaches one it's time to twist the throttle and wheelie into the lead.


The Spa racetrack features a vicious dip with a sudden change in direction. It takes some skill to take it properly.

ULTIMATE RIDE

MINDSCAPE ■ £24.99 ■ Joystick

Hmm, a biker's game. Rather than being your standard lean-a-sprite-bike-around-corners, *Ultimate Ride* tries to simulate what it's actually like to grease over tarmac on the back of a Jap hyper-bike.

The game comes on two disks which are packed out with customization options, pretty pictures and music. Six bikes are available each of which can have a manual or automatic gearbox. You can also have the choice of a wide selection of tyre types, which have minor effects on handling.

You can zoom around different racetracks: Suzuka, Donington, Spa, Hockenheim, Goiania and Laguna Seca. Alternatively you can road ride in the USA, Canada, UK, Japan, Germany and Australia. Two player racing is possible if another joystick is plugged in – the racing screen splits into two to show the different views.

It's The Law!

There are various obstacles on the course, depending on where you're riding. If you're on a road, then the police give you speeding tickets – if they can catch you. There's no oncoming traffic, just the occasional car or bike to overtake. On top of this is the weather (tends to rain a lot in Britain, compared to Australia) and various curves and dips in the road. All of these factors, plus the number of laps you have to race, can be customised to make the racing as easy or hard as you want.

In terms of graphics, the screens to choose your bike and the race course are much more appealing than the actual racing itself. Each track is made up of a set of polygons, which means that the computer takes quite a while to compute each course.

Riding is simple in theory and difficult in practice. The controls are; accelerate, brake tilt left and right, and change gear.

The Trouble with Bikes...

The trouble is that most of the bikes are not suited to the courses; only the FZR400 can really cope with the bends. The others are all way overpowered and go off the course at hard turns every time. Which leaves you crawling around in first gear if you want to stay in one piece.

Each course is much like a ribbon, with the road in the middle. If you go just a bit too far off the road, you crash every time. It's unrealistic to be able to crawl along if you're close enough to the road, and crash every time you twitch in the wrong direction. You can't turn around and go the wrong way, and none of the bikes have any lights so that means there is no night riding.

Collision detection is appalling, and mainly depends on luck. You can plough quite happily through trees and rocks at the side of the road, but if you go near a hazard – a kangaroo in Australia for instance – then you're history. Well, you can usually have five accidents before being removed from the race and where is the realism in that?

The inbetween racing graphics and music are good, but the racing is boring. If you try to win you crash and burn. To be precise, the screen goes black – just like a motorcycle accident? It could have been so good if only there was more to the racing – the motorcycles handle quite realistically, but the rest of the game is non-existent. ***Pat McDonald***

The choices available are the Kawasaki ZX10 Ninja, Honda VFR750R (RC30 racing version), CBR600 Hurricane, Suzuki GSX1100R, Yamaha FZR400 and V-MAX. The first four are big, unwieldy speed machines: the fifth is a manouevrable road bike, and the last is a classic tourer.



VERDICT

- Good graphics and music
- Bike sound is tinny and pathetic
- Courses can be individually tailored
- Lacks the controls of a simulation
- Not fun enough to be a game



After ripping open all those luverly pressies that Uncle Santa left at the bottom of the bed, any self-respecting games head would immediately 'catch the gaming fever and plug themselves into an Amiga'.

But, you may say, aside from all the movie licences and arcade conversions that you've been badgering the family for – just in case Santa doesn't really exist – what can you expect to see as stocking fillers? Well read on, MacDuff!

A quick peek out of the window will reveal just what it always does – Bing Crosby was lying. White Christmas? Humbug! It's another damp grey one. But if you long to see a piste-like fall in Preston, then *SuperSki Challenge* may be the answer. A spiffy skiing sort of game, it lets you brave the slopes at silly speeds without risk to life, limb and anything else beginning with L. L for leather.

Then – horror of horrors! – there is that knock on the door! Great Auntie Madge and Uncle Egbert from Stockton are here, clutching the annual supply of outsize jumpers, and all they ever say about computers is, "all those numbers! Oh it's so confusing deary".

Now you'll need a game they can understand, so it's time to pull the wrapping off *Jocky Wilson's Darts*. Seriously silly it may be, but anyone can join in the sheer mindless fun. It's even better with the correct dart-playing training – in other words, nick that glass of sherry that St Nick missed last night. After two bottles of Sainsbury's house white, to help see off the turkey, the one thing you absolutely *must* do is drive…

Not on the roads, of course, that would be stupid, criminal, irresponsible and potentially expensive on the repair front. Naw, take Domark's *Wheels of Fire* collection for a spin. With the likes of *Chase HQ* and *Powerdrift* in one box all you stand to lose are a few credits, not your licence.

Following a few hours hiding from the washing up it's time to work those calories off. What better way than with US Gold's *Sporting Gold*. There's 21 increasingly difficult events to try, ranging from ice skating to cliff diving. Done in the best arcade tradition it's all joystick waggling and button tapping fun, a fine way to work down that fourteenth helping of Chrissy Pud.

Quick, it's time for the Queen's speech, gawd bless 'er. This is momentous, because it heralds movie time! The traditional slot where the hottest TV movie of the year gets shown! However, if *The Wizard of Oz* or *Thunderball* isn't what you were hoping for, tune into the Hollywood Collection. It has four big-film games all of the highest calibre, namely Mister Batman, Officer Robocop, I. Jones esq on a last Crusade and Ghostbusters II.

Remember though, when you are giving software, that games are for life – not just for Christmas!

BAH! HUMBUG!

Or, how to have a perfect games Christmas at bargain prices

Hollywood Collection
Ocean £29.99

Robocop (73% AF3), *Indy Jones and the Last Crusade* (77% AF2), *Ghostbusters II* (79% AF6) and *Batman* (FG 90% AF5), combine to let you live out your celluloid dreams. A hard-hitting, action-packed extravaganza that would swell a newcomer's collection. Almost worth it just for *Batman* and you also get three other cracking titles as well for free!

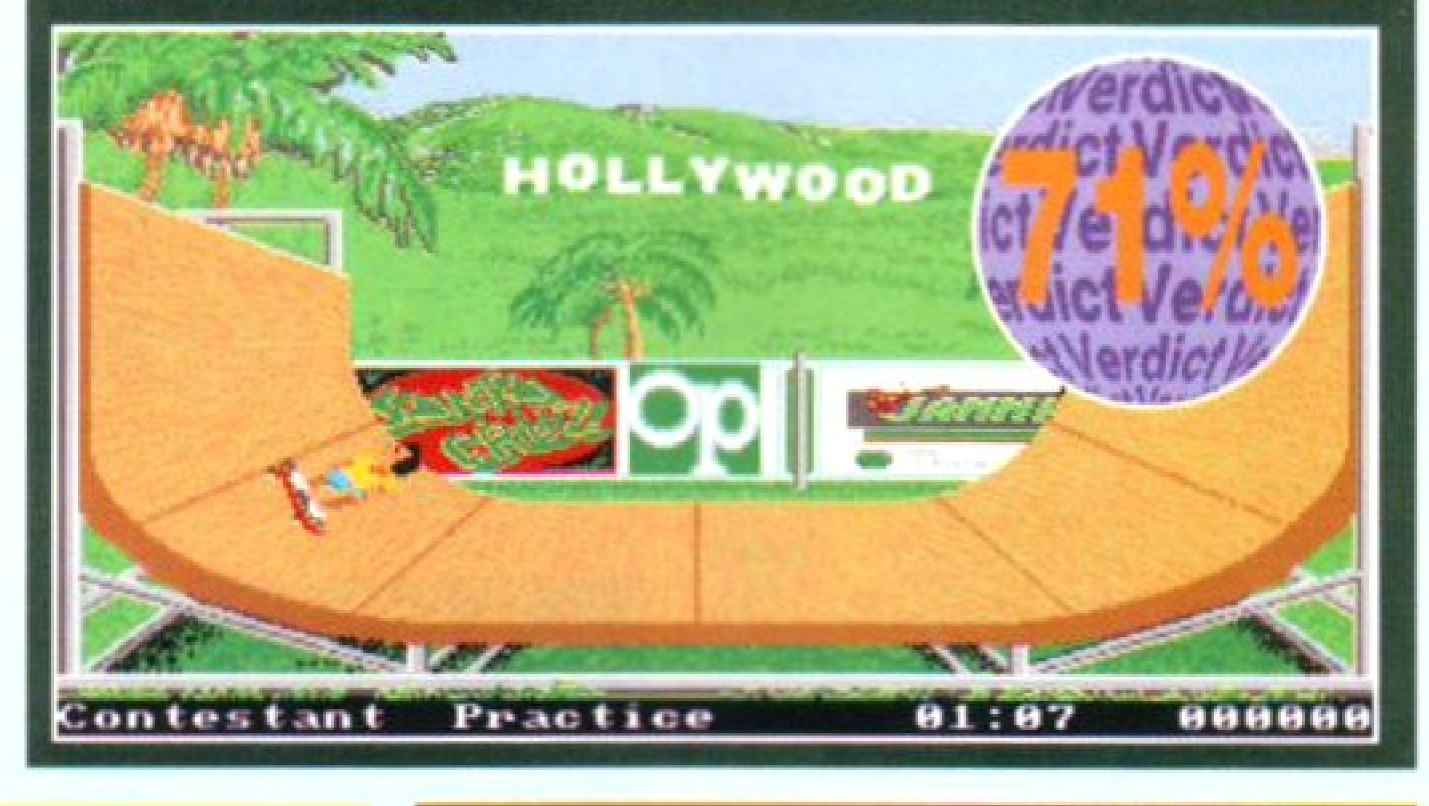
Verdict 80%



SPORTING GOLD
US GOLD £24.99

Three classic sports compilations in one box! 21 different events all done in the *Daley Thompson* arcade style. Waggle that stick to enjoy *California Games* (not reviewed), *The Games Winter Edition* (not reviewed) and *The Games Summer Edition* (61% AF5). Everything from BMX bicycle racing to Hurdles!

Verdict 71%



Jocky Wilson's Darts
Zeppelin £9.99

Mad as a balloon and twice as hatstand. Play head-to-head, tournament or round-the-clock darts matches. A wandering hand roams the board vaguely guided by the joystick and then you press fire to throw. The Amiga even does the counting and shouts out 180! Perfectly silly, but it has a worryingly addictive hook in the short term.



Verdict 77%

Superski Challenge
Smash 16 £9.99

Downhill, Slalom and Ski Jumping all in one pack. Fast, funny graphics of falling skiers and general snowy goings on. Limited and sometimes hard to control, but an interesting diversion that is considerably cheaper than a fortnight in St Moritz. Ideal for piste-heads!

Verdict 69%



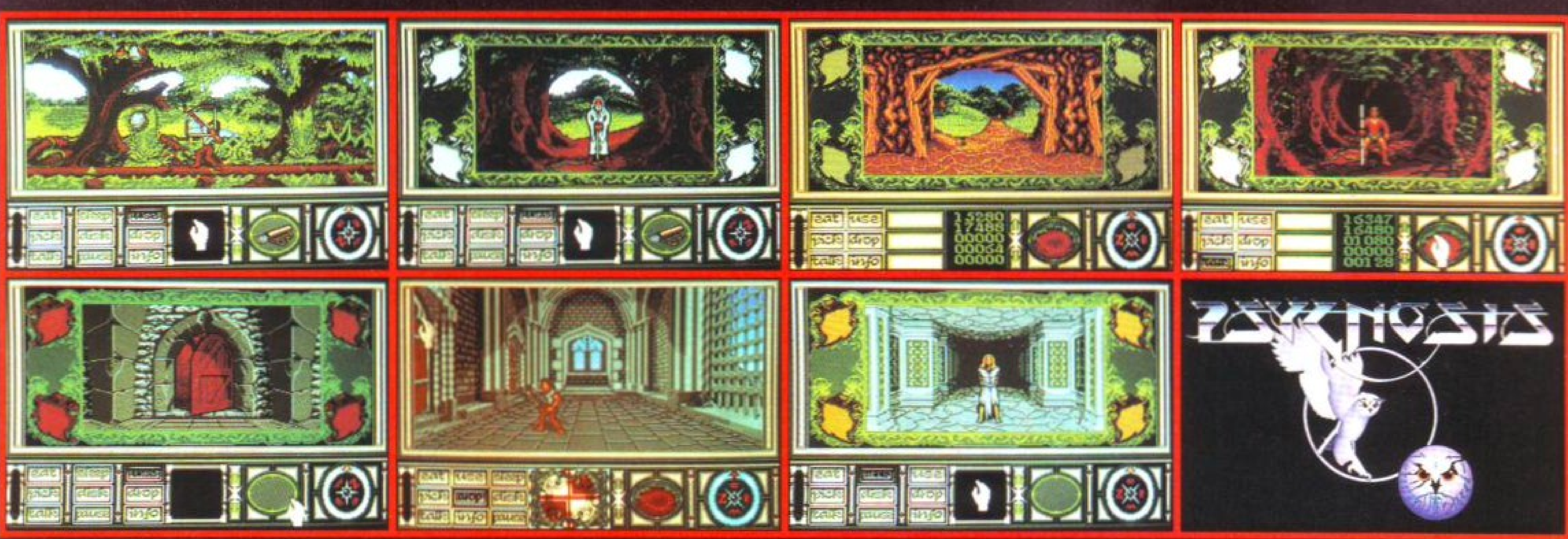
Wheels of Fire
Domark £29.99

The Chrimbo driving pack. *Chase HQ* (82% AF7), *Turbo Out Run* (70% AF6), *Hard Driving* (50% AF7) and *Powerdrift* (FG 92% AF5). Four major coin-op conversions that fought for the top spot this time last year. A must for all speed freaks.

Verdict 74%



OBITUS



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OBITUS
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Amiga Screen Shots

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THE GEMINI COLLECTION

WHEEL OF FORTUNE	**AMG 101**	TV version clone with complete speech syntheses!
MILESTONE	**AMG 103**	Computer version of Miles Bournes
SPACE GAMES	**AMG 106**	Cosmoroids (like asteroids) and Gravity Wars highlight this disk full of games.
PACKMAN '87	**AMG 108**	Better than the original. Great graphics, sound and options.
APPLICATIONS 1	**AMG 112**	Includes label maker, grocery list maker and Amigazer, a disk cataloguer/viewer for stars (like Planetarium).
GRAPHICS 2	**AMG 113**	Great programs for desktop publishing and video - allows you to run AmigaDos commands or programs for Icon.
BLACKJACK	**AMG 114**	Allows pair-splitting, double-down etc.Bandit - play the slot machines.
BULLRUN	**AMG 115**	Civil war strategy game disk also includes a small database, Reminder, Grocery, Construction Set, Will Kit and Label Maker programs.
VIRUS KILLER	**AMG 116**	Virus X stops viruses dead in their tracks.
DPSLIDE 1	**AMG 117**	Another in the great series of slide shows with great artwork.
DOMINOES	**AMG 118**	Dominoes game with impressive graphics. Also Tic-Tac-Toe, Drawing and Molecules.
ANIMATIONS 3	**AMG 119**	More great animations
BOULDER DASH	**AMG 120**	Very popular game with great graphics. This disk is full - it has Othello, Life3 and many useful utilities
MAIL MANAGER	**AMG 121**	For people who need a mail list manager to store names and addresses of friends, clients, members etc.
BASIC GRABBAG 2	**AMG 127**	Around 25 programs of various types
GAMES 3	**AMG 128**	More great games including Vegas Slot machine, Pegboard and Reversi.
BUSINESS PROGRAMS 1	**AMG 129**	Programs include address book, amortization program, talking mail manager, label printer and more. Label printer is great for making return labels in large quantities.
AMOEBA INVADERS	**AMG 130**	This fantastic game plays just like the original arcade classic, but with enhanced colour and digitised sound.
FUTURE SOUND DEMO	**AMG 131**	Another great digitised sound demo includes the wicked witch of Oz.
BASIC GRABBAG 1	**AMG 132**	Almost 60 programs written in Basic. Includes games, utilities and educational programs.
AMIGA BASIC PROGRAMS	**AMG 133**	Over 50 games, utilities, applications, entertainment and finance.
CALENDAR	**AMG 134**	A very good personal calendar for bithdays, holidays, meeting, bills, etc.
Q-BERT	**AMG 135**	Derived from the old popular game of Q-bert. Superb graphics! Other programs include MakeLabel, Nutty 9 game, Softball Status, Hustle.
SINKING ISLAND II	**AMG 137**	The adventure begins. Text/graphics game with 4 map scenes, underground chambers and much more. Two drives recommended. (2 disks. AMG 137 A & B.)
MUSIC I	**AMG 138**	Ten superb selections. You won't believe that digitised sound is coming from your Amiga.
BATTLESHIP	**AMG 139**	A version of the old favourite. Play against the computer.
NORMAN ROCKWELL	**AMG 140**	17 beautifully digitised Rockwell paintings.
GREAT GRAPHIC GAMES	**AMG 141**	Missile Command 3-D Triclops, Cosmo and asteroids clone, Brakeout, Yahtzee, Hack and more
MCAD	**AMG 142**	A full-featured computer aided design program
BACKGAMMON	**AMG 143**	A great board game with excellent graphics. Superb colours and resolution.
SOLITAIRE	**AMG 144**	Complete with graphics and sound.
CRIBBAGE	**AMG 147**	Take on the computer!
BUSINESS 1	**AMG 148**	VC Spreadsheet, HP-10C calculator, and several diversions for when the boss isn't looking.
WORDWRIGHT WP	**AMG 149**	This word processor is complete with a spelling checker and dictionary, plus VDraw - a Shareware paint program.
SINKING ISLAND	**AMG 150**	Return to Sinking Island is an excellent adventure game.
POTPOURRI X	**AMG 151**	A TRON-like game. Also mercenary simulation game is included. Great graphics!!
TUTORIAL DISK 1	**AMG 154**	More of the best Amiga information.
TUTORIAL DISK 2	**AMG 155**	Full of info for programmers and users.
JUGGLER	**AMG 156**	Famous demo that shows the beautiful sculptured graphics of the Amiga.
AIRWAR	**AMG 158**	Great 3-D graphics enable you to experience this war version of Flight Simulator
STAR TREK: THE GAME	**AMG 159**	(2 disks) A brilliant masterpiece: one of the best Amiga programs we have. Extraordinary digitised sound and graphics lead you to believe that this is the real thing. Complete your 5-year mission abroad the USS Enterprise. A must for Trekkies! (1 MEG Amiga/w 2 drives min)
BATTLEFORCE V3.02	**AMG 161**	Ideal for Battletech players. 1-4 players can challenge each other or play against the computer.
NIBBLER	**AMG 162**	For making backup copies or just copying anything.
JR COMM/ W STARLIGHT	**AMG 163**	This is our best Amiga communications package
MIDI	**AMG 164**	(3 disks) A wealth of software for MIDI musicians and were previously released in Keyboard Magazine. Support for all popular synths with editor/librarians, utilities, sequences etc. Includes a variety of 'music videos' and animation sequences not available on other disks.
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DELIRIOUS 1	**AMG 171**	(2 disks) Remember Eddie Murphy's video "Delirious?" Well, this is it! It shows a picture of the comedy king. You select a topic from the menu and you will get the digitised version (of the video)! It's great! A must see, must hear demo! Don't forget the 2nd part of this (disk B!)
DELIRIOUS 2	**AMG 173**	More of the Eddie Murphy Delirious! Check it out! contains 2 disks!
NORTHSTAR DEMO	**AMG 175**	The disk contains a whole bunch of awesome synthesised music, graphic demo and messages! It shows some creative special effects too!
HORROR DEMOS	**AMG 176**	Contains four very different graphics and sounds demos. The first two are very gruesome! The third and fourth demos are music and graphic messages for those strange European programmers/hackers out there.It's nothing horrifying. But the first two are the best! Unbelievable animations!
DEREK AND CLIVE	**AMG 177**	2 disk set! This is part A. Contains digitised voices of Derek and Clive. Tells jokes for a long time.
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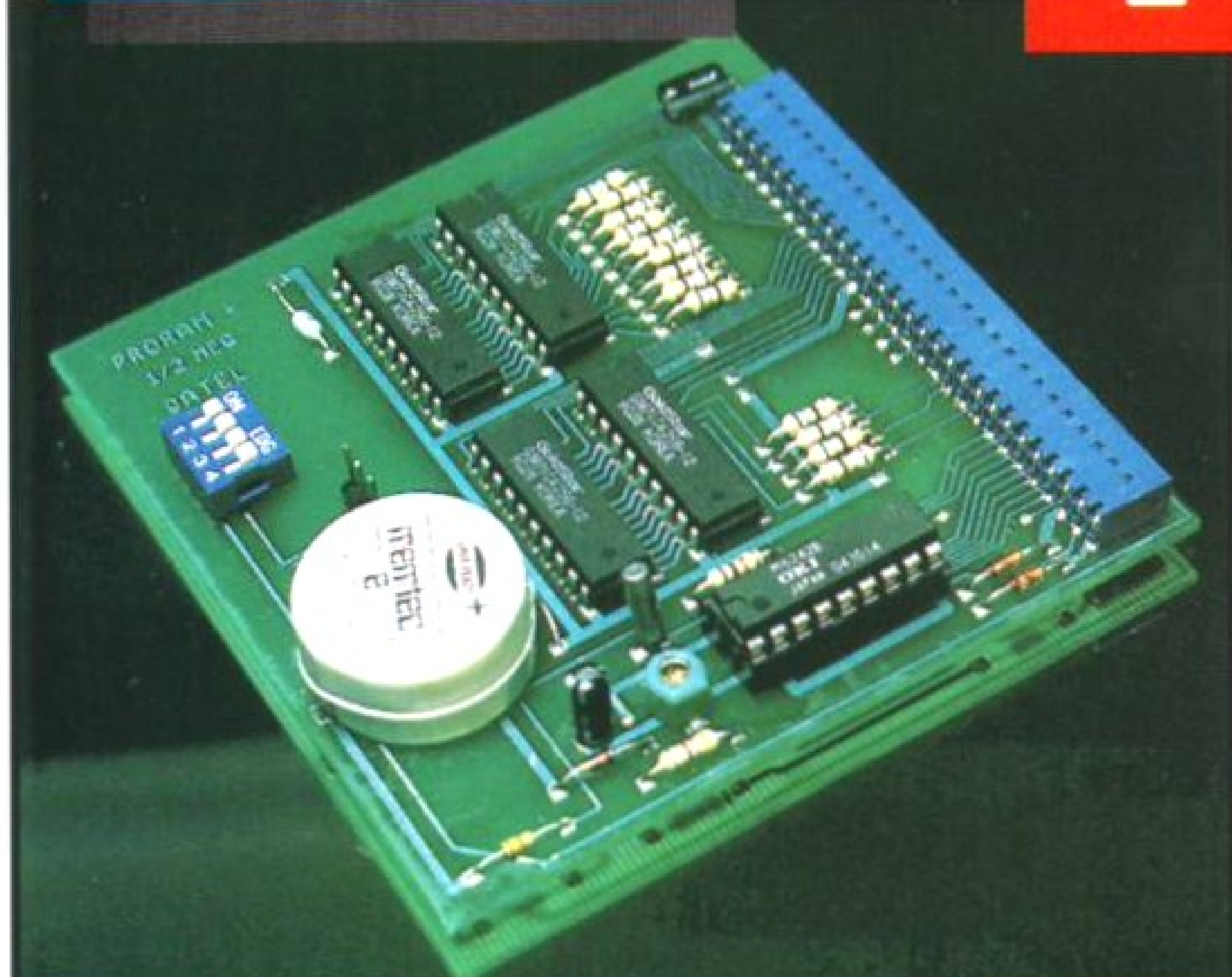
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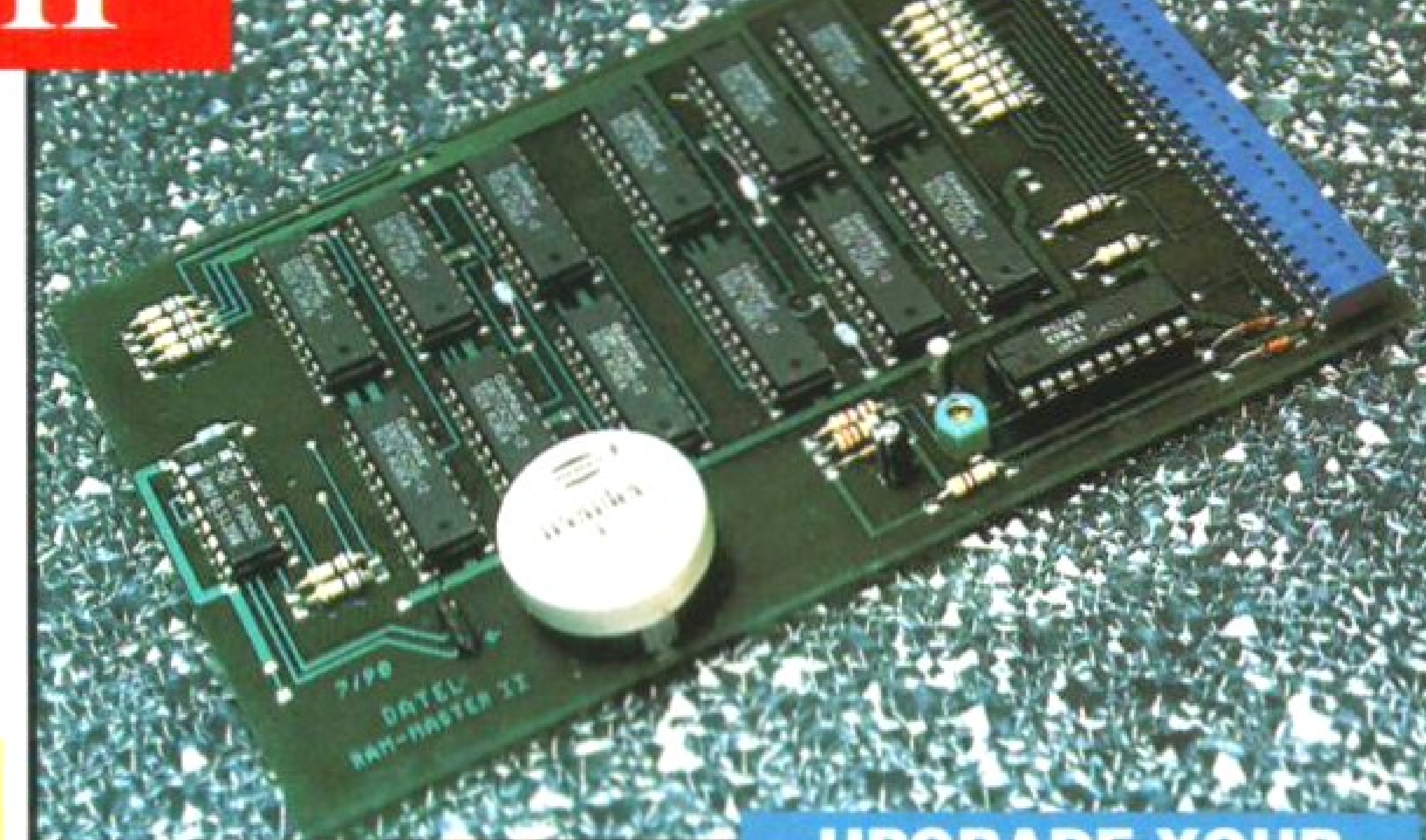
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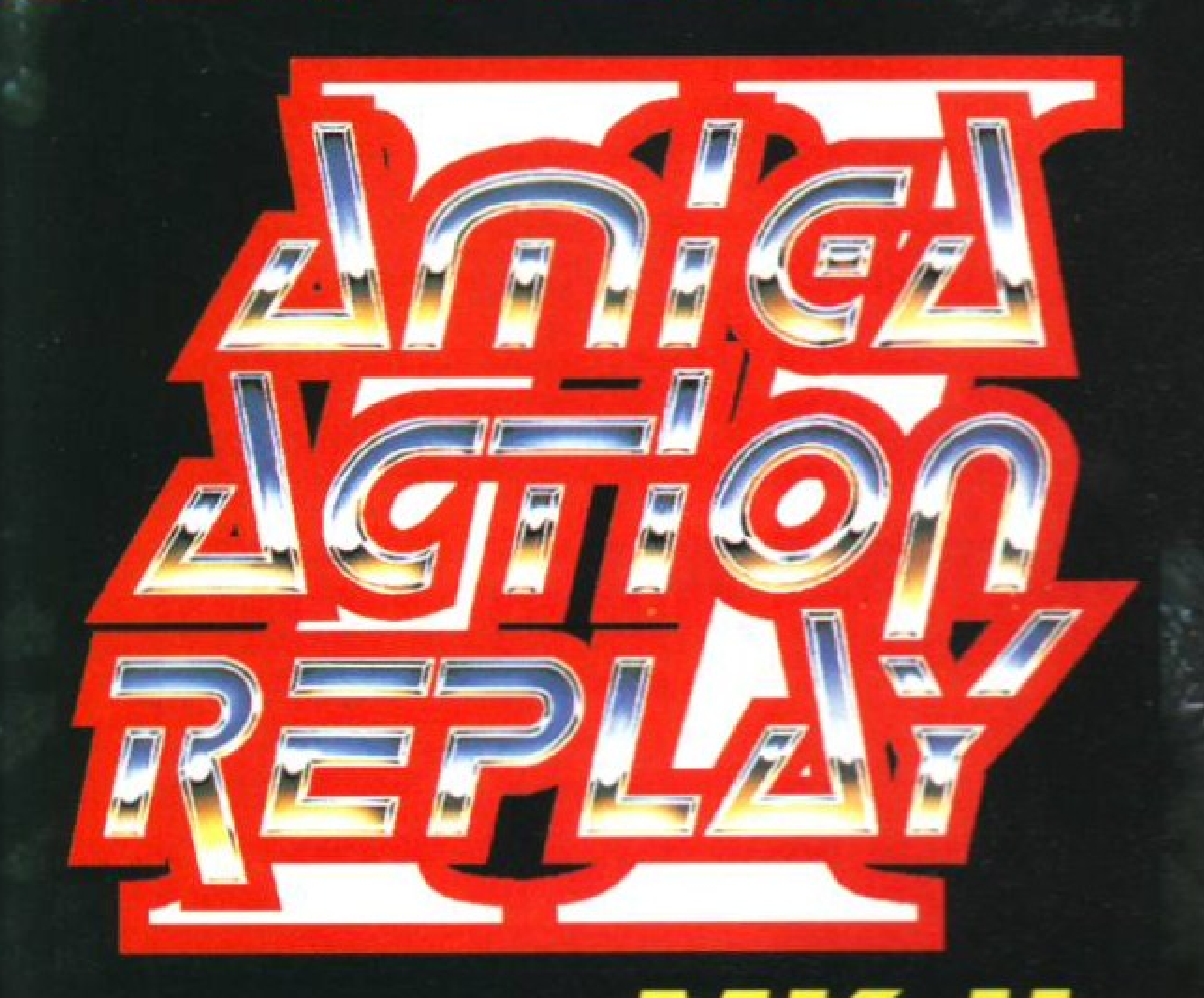
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The Lures of Robotics


Illustration: "I Am You Automatic Lover" by James Anderson

Will our planet be ruled by robots with brains the size of planets, or are we just too paranoid about androids? **PHIL SOUTH** sorts out robotic fact and fiction, while **PAT McDONALD** delves deeper into the practicalities of using your Amiga to control your own robotic devices.

Robots originally cropped up in the first burst of sci-fi mania way back in the 1920s. The name itself came from the slaves in a play called *R.U.R.* (1920) by a Czech, Karel Capek. It showed the servants of society as mechanical men named robots, after 'robota', the Czech word for work. After that the name stuck. Every mechanical man in works of fact and fiction in the rest of human history has carried the name.

The original robot movie was Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) and in many ways this is still one of the best ever made. The Thirties and Forties were pretty quiet, robotically speaking, probably due to a thing called World War II. The real drive to provide us with robot servants didn't start in earnest until the Fifties, when pictures of huge robots carrying scantily clad women through smoking ruins became the cliche of a decade.

Back then, robot dreams reflected a belief that science – from washing machines to cars – could be the saviour of mankind. Ever since, robotics – and the artificial intelligence that could make them think for themselves – has been a kind of computing Holy Grail. Everyone worships at the altar of the darn thing, everyone wants it, but only very few people know what it's for.

Practical Robotics

As late as the mid-Eighties, robotics magazines like *Your Robot* and *Practical Robotics* sprang up in response to the wider use of home computers and the growing interest in robots as the 'next big thing' – only to spring down again just as rapidly. DIY robots have never really caught on, probably for much the same reason DIY space travel never has – to do anything seriously interesting, you need huge amounts of money and a great deal of expertise.

This kind of explains why you can't buy robots to hook up to your Amiga – there isn't the demand. The only real practical robotics takes either an educational form, like making machinery out of Technical Lego or using the educational language Logo to control a small wheeled robot. Still, don't despair – if you do want to experiment with using your Amiga to control robot devices for fun or learning, you can do, as Pat explains later in this piece.

Robots in the Real World

Robots are now everyday occurrences in many workplaces around the globe – and generally, they're big, ugly, uninteresting affairs. Like, for instance, Industrial Manipulators: huge robot arms, used for repetitive assembly tasks in factories. You've seen the ad on telly, "hand built by robots"? It means built by these and

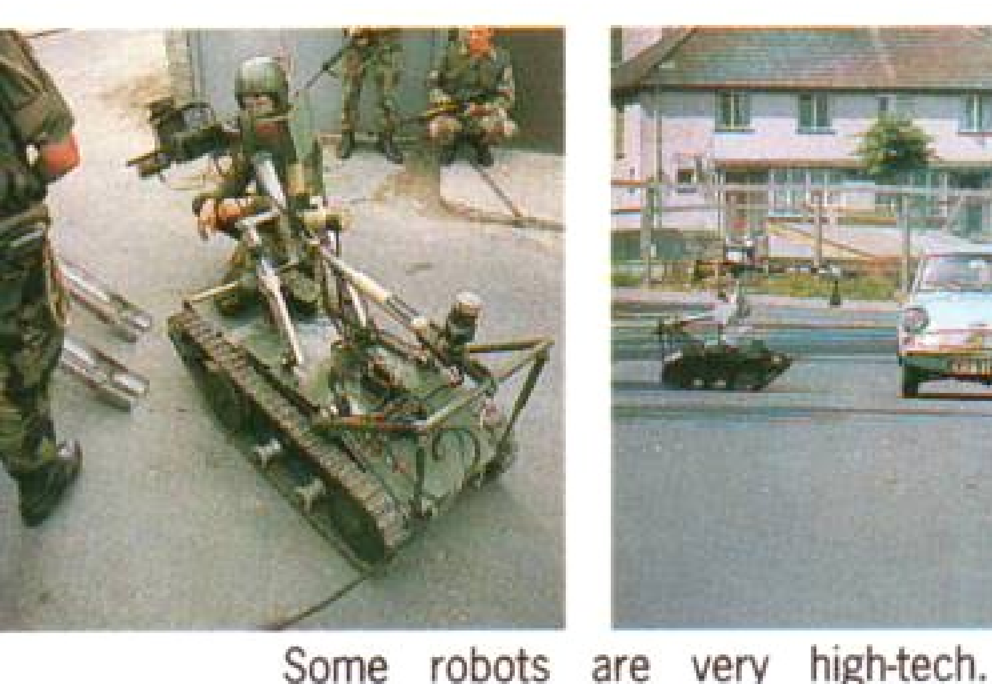
Continued overleaf ▸

by Autonomous Guided Vehicles (AGVs), carriers which have sensors to avoid collision. They use big flat ones to carry cars round the factory.

Other common robots include Telechirs, usually a matched pair of robots arms, used for the handling of dangerous chemicals; Medical Simulators for the training of doctors, which respond to techniques deemed too dangerous to practise on a human subject: Remotely Controlled Vehicles like the bomb disposal robots used by the police and army, a remote controlled device.

even directly using the patient's own nerve impulses – like a simple version of Robocop, really. Exoskeletons, large hydraulic lifting devices not unlike the loader device Sigourney Weaver used at the end of *Aliens* to fight the Queen Alien, really do exist.

Then, of course, there are toy robots. These are little plastic things which you buy for kids and then they break them. Some of the better ones have microprocessors in them, but all this seems to do is make a prettier pattern on the carpet when you eventually step on them.







Some robots are very high-tech. Space probes, like the Viking Mars probe, are a sophisticated kind of exploratory robot, with a remotely-controlled manipulator arm. Military robots range from the cute and funny, like the sort that disarm bombs, to the sinister and very scary, like cruise missiles, which are actually very complex AGVs. They have a pre-programmed route in their computer brains, and they are able to adapt the route as they go.

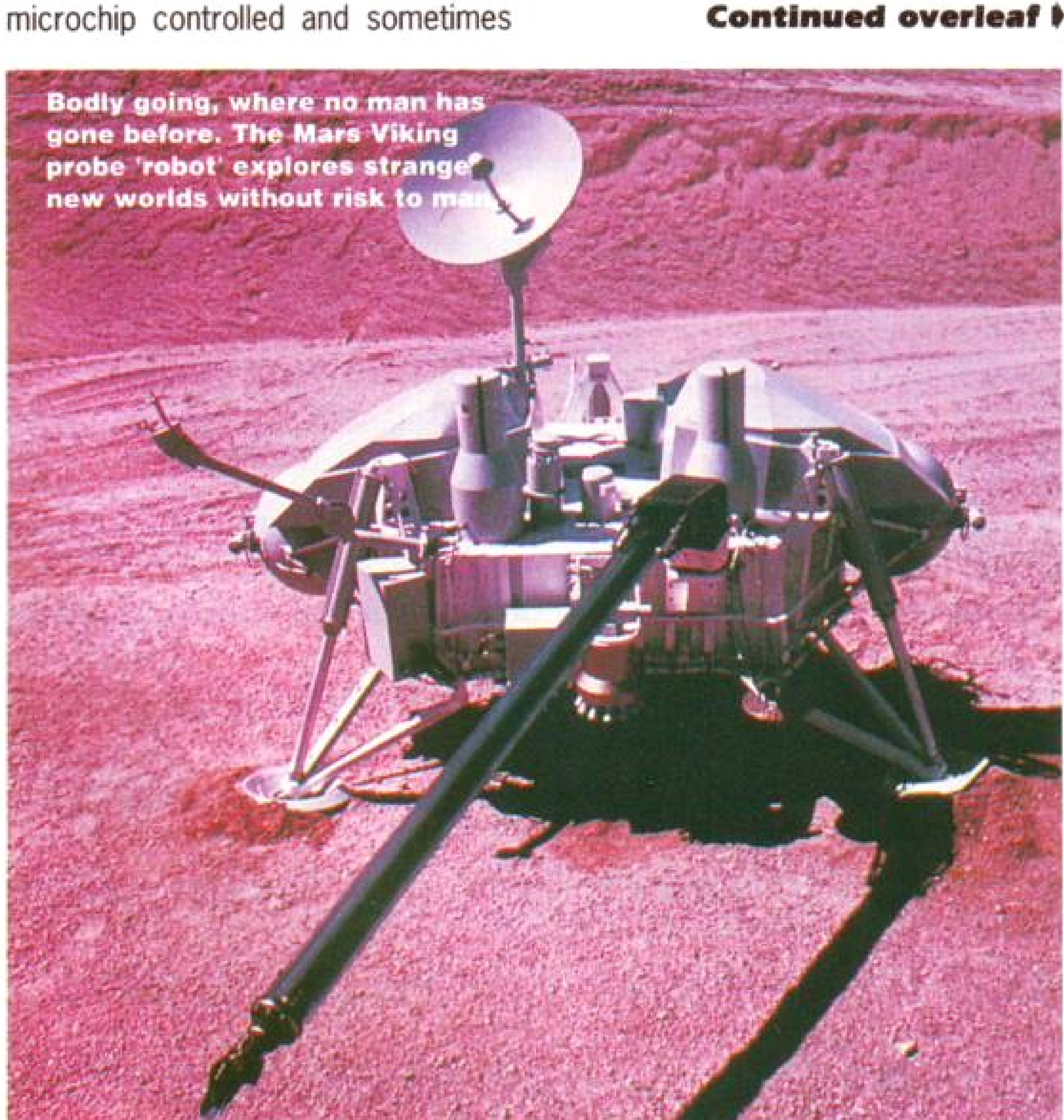
Some robots are quite ridiculous, like programmable mannequins, which are shop dummies which perform a sequence of pre-programmed events – a bit like TV news readers. Others are straight out of the movies: prosthetics are mechanical limbs, microchip controlled and sometimes

Thinking Machines

The real robots of the sci-fi dream are not these industrial machines – they are those that can think for themselves like humans do. And this is where Artificial Intelligence comes in. Currently most AI research is in the area of expert systems, which are big databases of ways an expert would solve a problem. But this is not really independent thought.

Neural networks are the closest we come at present to mechanical brains. These simulate the working of neurons in the human brain with a network of little cells in memory. Each cell in the system has a simple set of connections that it can make to other cells, and the device or program is then trained, not programmed.

Continued overleaf ▸



Bodly going, where no man has gone before. The Mars Viking probe 'robot' explores strange new worlds without risk to man.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

During the mid-Eighties many toy robots were released on an unprepared market. They could usually be connected to a home computer without fuss, usually through the RS232 (serial) or printer (parrallel) interfaces. Gadgets like the Hero 1, the Omnibot and Trundle were hailed as the first of the new home robot revolution.



The Amiga has been largely ignored as far as the robotics world is concerned.

Come the Nineties, the market has evaporated. Very few people went out and bought a toy robot for one simple reason – they didn't do anything useful. They could move about, whistle a few tunes and (sometimes) make a clumsy attempt to pick up a pencil. Not exactly an impressive or exciting performance.

Robotics is an area in which the amateur can explore new territory and be a real asset. If you're willing to 'get your hands dirty', there are several works which explain the theory and practise of making robotic devices. None of these are Amiga-specific, so some work will be required in building your own projects.

Yes, your own projects! Robots are always meant to serve a purpose of some kind. Think of the robot's role before you sit down with a pen and paper. The toy robots didn't make an impact because they were expensive, useless gadgets. Your first projects will be at the same or perhaps a simpler level, but as a hobbyist you can invent many gadgets that haven't seen the light of day.

That's all very well, but what about writing the software to control robots? One little known fact is that most BASIC languages can be used to write robot controller software. The commands to write and read information to and from the RS232 and parrelel is inbuilt into the language – even the free AmigaBASIC supplied with every machine can do this.

Scan through the manual of your favourite flavour of the language, and look up the command OPEN when used with the devies SER: or PAR:, . and the INPUT # and OUTPUT # commands to read and write data.

***The Robots Book*, by Richard Pawson, is an excellent guide to the subject, if a little difficult to get hold of.**

In the Public Domain, there's a lot of stuff to get you going in Artificial Intelligence, from LISP interpreters to example neural nets written in C, Forth and even Basic. A litle time spent searching your PD library's catalogue and the FISH disks for examples of these types of programs could pay off.



Robots and the Amiga

It's a challenge: to design your own robot, write your own controlling software and then have your very own metal creature to do your bidding. Here's some practical advice to help you along...

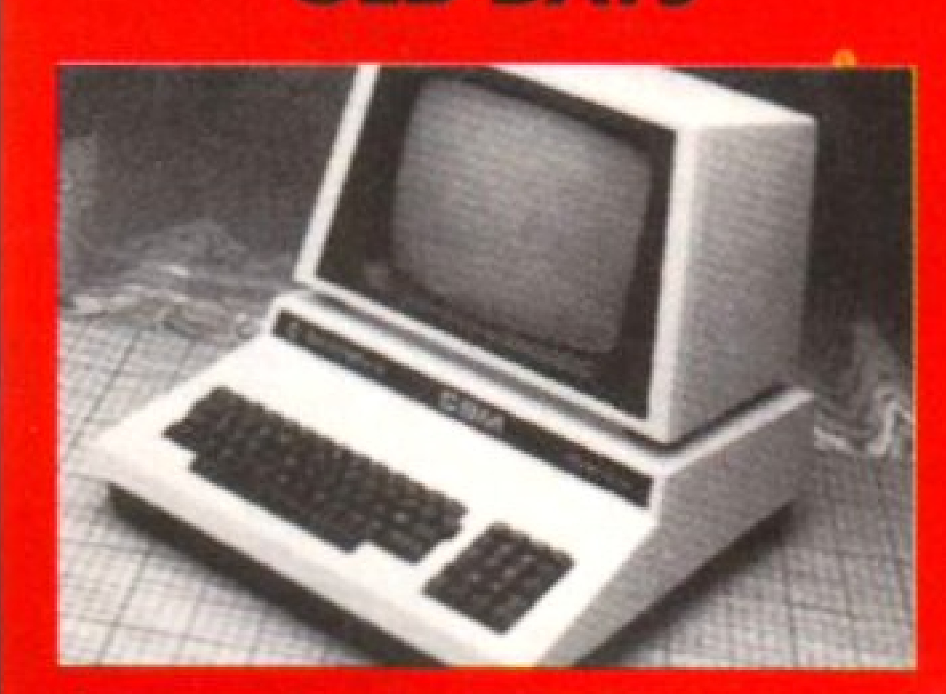
The Amiga has been largely ignored as far as robotics go. Designers seem to think that any computer which is sold in the high street is automatically unsuitable for 'serious' control applications – it's a stigma as far as the wise men in their crystal towers are concerned.

This short-sighted attitude is blinding many people to the potential of our beloved machine as a controller. It comes down to this: for automation purposes, you need to combine several sensors with a computer. The computer makes decisions on what information it receives and activates a machine – be it electrical, hydraulic or pneumatic – to perform a phyical task.

That's the theory, but to do it properly, the brain of the system has to do several jobs simultaneously and as fast as it possibly can: that's where the Amiga comes in – it can do several processes at once, by means of its multitasking capabilities. If extra speed is needed, you can always plug in an accelerator card.

A multitasking machine also offers the ability to test each process separately, rather than having to write the whole controller program at once. This means (in theory, at least) that writing the decision-making software would be considerably faster and less complicated.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS



Commodore's old PET, the first home computer, was an excellent robotic controller.

The lack of the Amiga's impact in this area contrasts very sharply with a much earlier machine, the Commodore PET (Personal Electronic Translator). This computer can still be found on many a factory shop floor. Its success was mostly due to the fact that it was endowed with an IEEE 488 interface.

The IEEE 488 can be thought of as a glorified printer interface – but the fact remains that it was and is the standard method of connecting computers to scientific sensory equipment. The puny PET remains capable of handling the automation computation of yesterday and today.

What has happened now is that there has been an explosion in computing, resulting in the Amiga. The problem is that robotics is (in this country at least) mostly theoretical science rather than a solid industry: it has not developed at the same extraordinary speed as the computer world.

As a result there are no real standards for machinery to interface to computers. The SCSI type interface probably offers the best potential in this area. But until there are standards for chassis, locomotion, vision, smell and speech units which use a standard interface, the Amiga's power will remain sadly underexploited in this field.

MDR INTERFACES

One company which has noticed the Amiga's abilities for command and control is MDR Interfaces. They specialize in computerized control systems rather than true robotics, but the difference is skin deep in terms of technology.

MDR's old system used a microprocessor to control domestic appliances in the home. So you could program it to turn on the heating and lights at a particular time, and wire it up to sensors and alarms to defeat burglars.

Their new system does the same job, but the computer part of it is an Amiga. The controller software is fully multitasking, so you can use the computer without turning off the alarm system. The controls are all time based (for which the computer must have a real-time clock fitted). Installing one to your home costs from £700 upwards, depending on exactly what you want.

If a modem is fitted, you can dial up the system and control the system from any location on the globe or indeed in the air. Likewise, the computer can dial you up and tell you that an emergency is in progress (not necessarily a burglary – flood, fire and earthquake could equally well be detected with the relevant sensor).

MDR are working on an Amiga based computerized lighting system. This can control up to 512 lighting stations (with the industry standard DMX512 system) for cueing and fade levels. Each light can be set from the computer, or from where the light is – this is acheived by plugging in a controller to the rigger port of each controller. So the lighting levels of a large theatre or concert hall can be controlled from just one place.

Contact Richard de Rivas at MDR on 0825 790294.



Richard de Rivas, the brains behind MDR Interfaces, takes yet another order for his system.



This is MDR's home control interface, a box that takes the commands the Amiga sends it and actually does the switching on and off.

I can see a use for fractals in this, to build a self-organised structure in an organic way, just like a real brain. It's just an idea, but it's copyright © 1990 P South if it works!

Machine vision is very tricky, as a lot of what we take for granted with our vision is hard to duplicate. The WISARD system is a neural network based on conventional computer technology, which scans in an image of the person it wants to recognise, checks various pixels for shade and position and checks it against a database. If the face matches the faces stored in memory it recognises the face. If it does know the face, it learns it.

Robots At The Movies

Whatever the advancements in real-world robotics, the movies are always several steps ahead. In fact it's perhaps the movies, more than books or anything else, that have given us our real lasting fascination for robots and thinking computers.

Let me take you back in time, now, to the 1950s. Among such drossy yet oddly engaging flicks as *Robot Monster* and *The Colossus of New York*, came classic science fiction tales like *Forbidden Planet*. *Forbidden Planet* is still a very watchable film, and even if the costumes and acting were very 50s, the robotics portrayed is still bang up-to-date. In 1950, you see, Issac Asimov had postulated his Laws Of Robotics in books like *I, Robot* – and movie makers and writers all stuck to them like something very sticky indeed.

The Sixties were more keen on skin than steel, so sci-fi in the so-called 'summer of love' had a distinctly saucy flavour. Robots, if there were any in the movie at all, were usually female and had glittery ruffs around their necks and not much else on besides a lycra body sausage. It was only in the latter half of the decade that robotic sci-fi movies came of age with the likes of *Barbarella, 2001: A Space Odyssey,* and *Alphaville*.

The latter was more of an art film (Trivia point: this flick was nearly remade in the 70s with Debbie "Deborah" Harry and Robert Fripp!) although it did portray androids and as such was very advanced. *Barbarella* was, strictly speaking, yet another excuse for Jane Fonda to get her chubbies out on film, but almost by accident it was rather good sci-fi. But no film, not even *Metropolis* and *Forbidden Planet*, was quite as ahead of its time as Stanley Kubrick's *2001*.

This film marked the beginning of realistic spacecraft and space as a working environment. When it was

Continued overleaf ▸

" No film was quite as much ahead of its time as Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Even though man had yet to walk on the the moon, the film showed astronauts going on a trip to Jupiter with a talking, intelligent computer called HAL. "



A meeting of minds: the ex-Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, meets the man that could some day replace her as leader of the Conservative Party. Will our country ever be controlled by robots? Is it already?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE FORMAT COVERDISK!

Artificial Intelligence is seen at its most refined in chess programs. These imitate a human chess player, and unless you are very competent the computer beats you. A pair of computer scientists have built a computer, called Deep Thought, which can beat a Grand Master at chess! (For more details check out the Oct'90 issue of *Scientific American*.)

Another use of AI in games is in the natural language parsers used in adventure games to help the computer understand what you want to do, of which the one used by Magnetic Scrolls is a perfect state of the art example. These aren't always too clever - and they don't learn with experience. Both the Coverdisk AI programs, *Elisa* and *Niall*, are designed to understand language and try to hold an intelligent conversation.

Elisa

One of the earliest and most popular examples of natural language parsing, this is a simulation of Rogerian Analysis, a 'robot doctor' if you like. The concept works because the minimum of stimulus from the doctor is needed during a session to keep the patient talking. When the sentences are too complex, it just tells you to keep going. Sometimes the feedback you get from the program is spookily realistic, other times it's just plain silly. Either way it's a perfect example of what you can do just using a few lines of Basic code and a good idea.

```
Compiled with HiSoft BASIC
TO STOP TYPE 'SHUT UP'...
HI!  I'M ELIZA.  WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?
? I HAVE TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU ARE LIKE.
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I AM LIKE.
? EXACTLY, YOU DON'T THINK THERE YOU ARE NOT.
DOES IT PLEASE YOU TO BELIEVE I AM NOT.
? NO, I WISH YOU COULD THINK FOR YOURSELF.
?Redo from start
? NO I WISH YOU COULD THINK FOR YOURSELF.
WE WERE DISCUSSING YOU-- NOT ME.
? I HAVE A PROBLEM.
SAY, DO YOU HAVE ANY PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS?
? YES.
ARE YOU SURE?
? YES.
PLEASE DON'T REPEAT YOURSELF!
? POSITIVELY.
WHAT DOES THAT SUGGEST TO YOU?
? PERHAPS I SHOULD SEE A PSYCHIATRIST.
I SEE.
? I HAVE THIS URGE TO DESTROY COMPUTERS.
DO COMPUTERS WORRY YOU?
? A TRULY INTELLIGENT COMPUTER WOULD WORRY ME.
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ME IN PARTICULAR?
? NO.
ARE YOU SAYING NO JUST TO BE NEGATIVE?
?
```

***Elisa* always produces recognisable English but is easily shown up to be thick as a very short plank.**

Niall

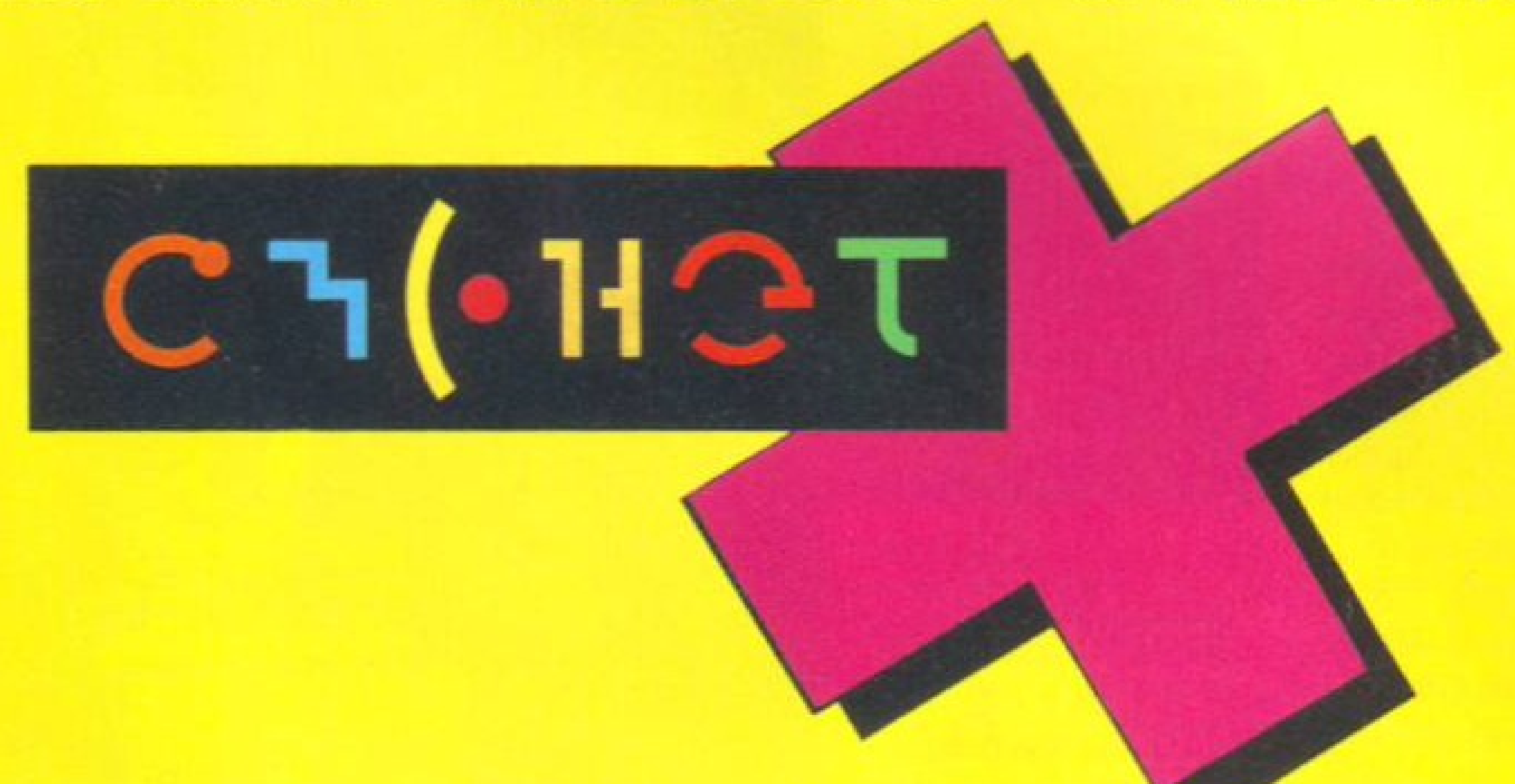
The other program, *Niall* (*Non Intelligent Amos-Language Learner*) is somewhat more interesting. As you type in sentences, it breaks them down into words and their usage. To a certain extent it will learn from what you type, and will gradually build up its vocabulary until it can occasionally produce sentences which have meaning.

```
USER:  I wandered lonely as a cloud.
NIALL: The waiters were not kylie minogue.
USER:  Margaret Thatcher is not the Prime Minister.
USER:  I like curry.
NIALL: Pardon.
USER:  Granted.
NIALL: Fine.
USER:  I like music.
NIALL: I do you like music.
USER:  What sort of music.
NIALL: Really.
USER:  Batman is a film.
NIALL: We will have a very large vocabulary.
USER:  When will you have a very large vocabulary.
NIALL: Yes.
USER:  I like to see you behaving positively.
USER:  Curry always contains spices.
NIALL: You like computers are not called kylie.
USER:  Computers are fascinating.
NIALL: Maybe you like to.
USER:  To be or not to be that is the question.
NIALL: My slave.
USER:  The fault dear Niall lies not in our stars but in ourselves.
NIALL: How about music.
USER:  Music can be fun.
NIALL: When will you are.
USER:  How intelligent are you really.
NIALL: I like.
USER:  To think that you're intelligent.
NIALL: You like a cup of chess.
USER:  Not really.
NIALL: Batman is not  you ever been abroad.
USER:  A cup of chess is not.
NIALL: Okay.
USER:  The locusts came and devoured the harvest.
NIALL: I do you are fascinating .
USER:  Really.
NIALL: Pardon.
USER:  Granted.
NIALL: I thought so.
USER:  Damien Sabo is off to the Gulf.
NIALL: You like to spain once.
USER:  He's not even taking his tank.
NIALL: Yes you like what.
USER:  I have never been to Spain.
NIALL: Computers are.
USER:  Soon it will be Christmas.
NIALL: I like kylie minogue.
USER:  Do you buy her music.
NIALL: It will have a nice day for it is correct.
USER:  I do not agree.
NIALL: Fine.
USER:  I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts.
NIALL: The same thing really.
USER:  On a scale of one to ten how smart are you.
NIALL: Margaret thatcher is not want one to spain once.
USER:  See what I mean.
NIALL: Really .
USER:  I meet all sorts of interesting computers in this job.
NIALL: It is a computer.
USER:  You are not really interested in my problems.
NIALL: When will have you mean by that is the question .
USER:  Not that I have any problems.
NIALL: Very large vocabulary.
USER:  Well none worth speaking of.
NIALL: What a human.
USER:  The first computer generated joke.
NIALL: I do you really  you have never been to see what we tell them.
USER:  Nice weather we are having.
NIALL: It came from the gulf  they merely do.
USER:  What is two plus two.
NIALL: To think that is not the harvest .
USER:  _
```

***Niall* is often nonsensical, but given enough input it can make up its own quite coherent sentences.**

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made man had yet to walk on the moon, the film showed astronauts going on a trip to Jupiter with a talking intelligent computer called HAL. (Trivia point: HAL reputedly stood for Heuristically programmed ALgorithmic computer. In fact, if you look at the letters they are all one step away from the letters I, B and M!)

After 2001

Since *2001*, the field has been wide open. A young director called George Lucas made his first feature a couple of years later, called *THX 1138*. The film featured robot policemen, and in these metal men it was easy to see the beginnings of the *Star Wars* robots fermenting in George's brain. But it also heralded the way for a lot of movies in the 70s which further explored the ways that robots could make friends and kill people.

Logan's Run, Dark Star, Westworld, The Stepford Wives, Silent Running and *Demon Seed* are all examples of 70s movies showing robots doing humans to death, topping off the decade with a not-so-good film which inspired a lot of good ones, *Saturn 3*. Although the film itself was not so good, it had a big shiny and malevolent robot in it, who's primary role in the film was to try and kill people. Both *Terminator* and *Hardware* owe much to this little seen, even littler recalled flick starring Kirk Douglas and Farrah Fawcett.

One film which shines out as the primary catalyst for all this robotic activity in recent years is, of course, *Star Wars*. This set the tone for a legion of copycats, especially in the way that the technology, computers and robots especially, were old and used-looking, in some cases positively decrepit. And so the 80s was a very 'used look' decade, from the cyberpunk *Android* and *Blade Runner* type movies, all the way up to the likes of *Max Headroom, Short Circuit* and, of course, *Robocop*.

So Now What?

We find ourselves in 1990, with over 70 years of robots in the movies to draw from, and what can we say we've learned? Well, if your computer starts acting up and eavesdropping on your conversations, switch it off. If a robot you own starts acting strangely, call Tom Selleck and run out of the house. And most of all, if your boyfriend or girlfriend gives you a piece of a robot that looks like a skull, have it melted down and move to another city.

Why all the Fuss?

So why all this fuss about robots, anyway? Well, perhaps it's because we want something we can control and play God with. Maybe it's to gain military power – having an army of autonomous guided robots at your control would be quite a strategic advantage. Possibly it's laziness – once robots are perfected that can think on their own, they can take over a broad range of jobs at which humans are either at risk, or just crap.

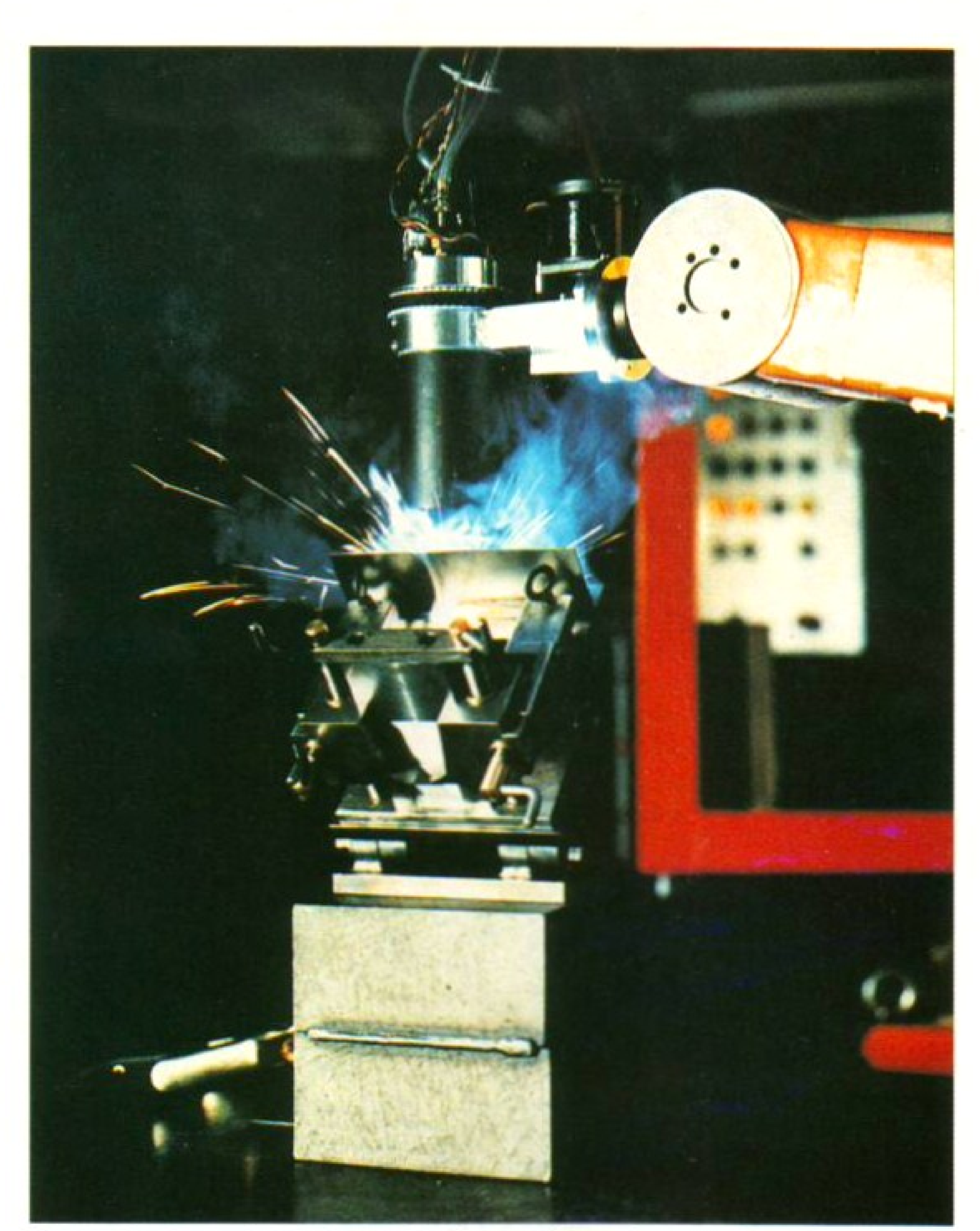
Maybe it's for fun – having game partners who never tire, or are ready to play at any time day or night is very convenient. Computers which can think enough to play chess are a start, but a fast-moving robot could give you a game of tennis on a real court, with variable skill levels.

I have a theory that the best way to get machines to think at all is, rather than break our backs trying to get them to think like humans, try to make them think like machines. After years of trying to stuff robotic machines into human-sized packages, we eventually made them their own shape, or shaped to do the job they were built for. So maybe intelligent robots will walk the Earth – and soon. But perhaps they won't actually walk.

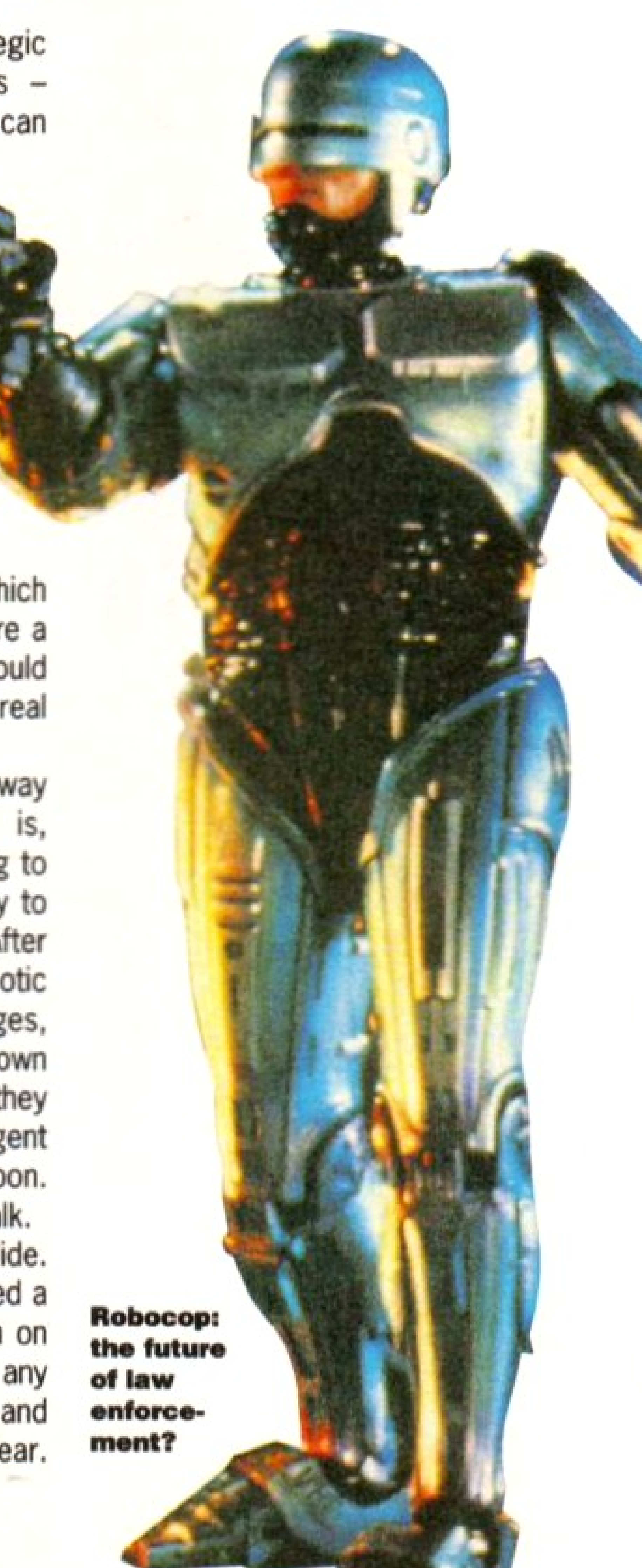
Maybe they'll hover, or glide. Maybe, like Clive Sinclair suggested a couple of years ago, they'll perch on our shoulders like a parrot. In any event, whatever way computers and robots develop, one thing is clear. Their future is in your hands. ■

The Definitive Robot Movie List

- 2001: A Space Odyssey (Stanley Kubrick, 1968, GB)
- Alphaville (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965, Fr/It)
- Android (Aaron Lipstadt, 1982, US)
- Barbarella (Roger Vadim, 1967, Fr/It)
- Blade Runner (Ridley Scott, 1982, US)
- The Colossus of New York (Eugene Lourie, 1958, US)
- Dark Star (John Carpenter, 1974, US)
- D.A.R.Y.L. (Simon Wincer, 1985, GB)
- The Day The Earth Stood Still (Robert Wise 1951, US)
- Demon Seed (Donald Cammell, 1977, US)
- Dr Who And The Daleks (Gordon Flemyng, 1965, GB)
- Electric Dreams (Steve Barron, 1984, GB/US)
- Fantastic Planet (Rene Laloux, 1973, Fr/Cz)
- Forbidden Planet (Fred M. Wilcox, 1956, US)
- The Forbin Project (Joseph Sargent, 1969, US)
- Hardware (Richard Stanley, 1990, GB/US)
- Logan's Run (Michael Anderson, 1976, US)
- Metropolis (Fritz Lang, 1926, Ger)
- Robocop (Paul Verhoeven, 1987, US)
- Robot Monster (Phil Tucker, 1953, US)
- Runaway (Michael Crichton, 1984, US)
- Saturn 3 (Stanley Donen, 1980, GB)
- Short Circuit (John Badham, 1986, US)
- Silent Running (Douglas Trumbull, 1971, US)
- Slipstream (Stephen Lisberger, 1989, GB)
- Star Trek: The Motion Picture (Robert Wise, 1979, US)
- Star Wars (George Lucas, 1977, US)
- The Stepford Wives (Bryan Forbes, 1974, US)
- The Terminator (James Cameron, 1984, US)
- THX 1138 (George Lucas, 1970, US)
- Westworld (Michael Crichton, 1973, US)
- Who? (Jack Gold, 1974, GB)



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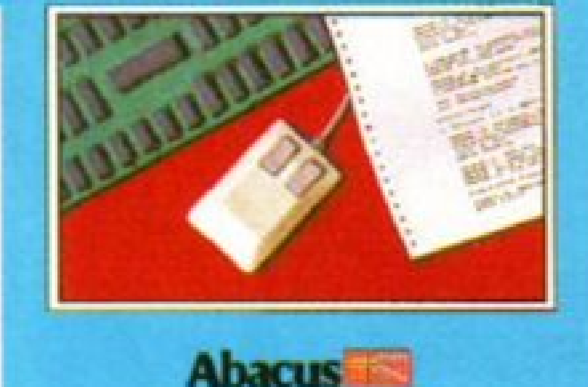


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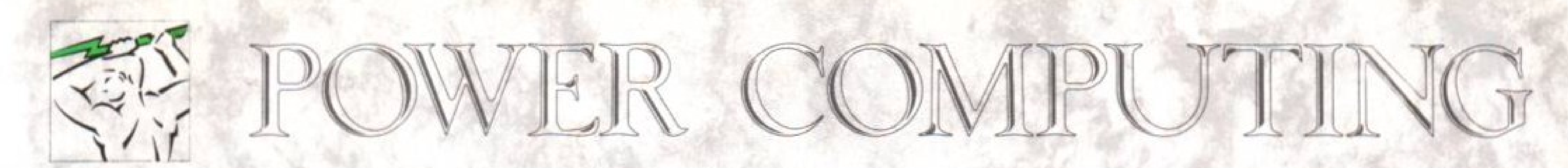


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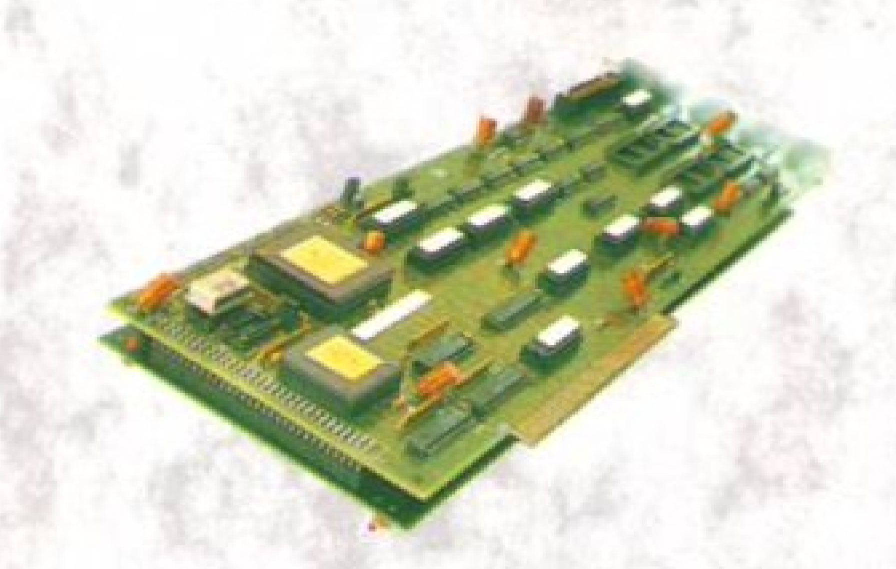
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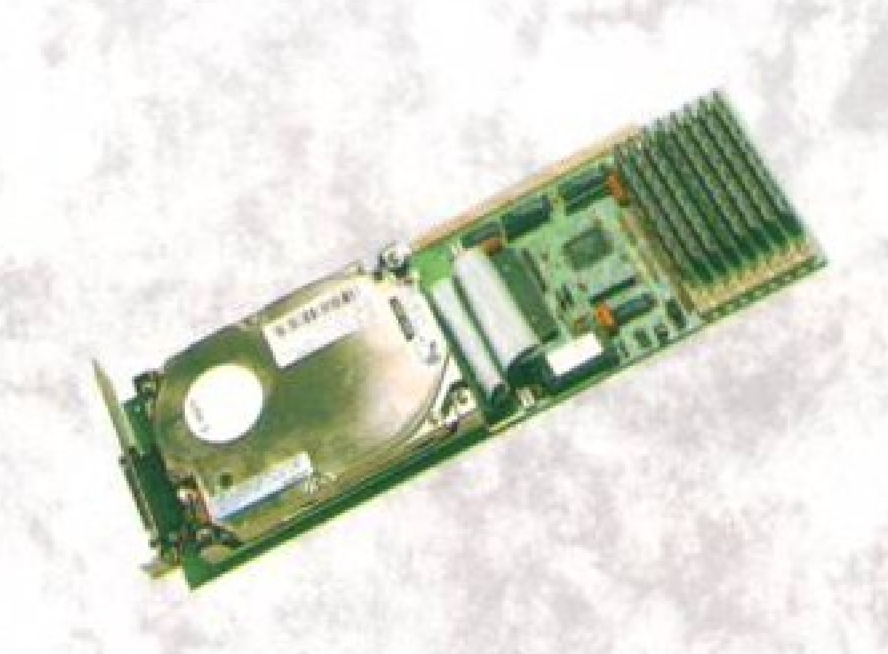
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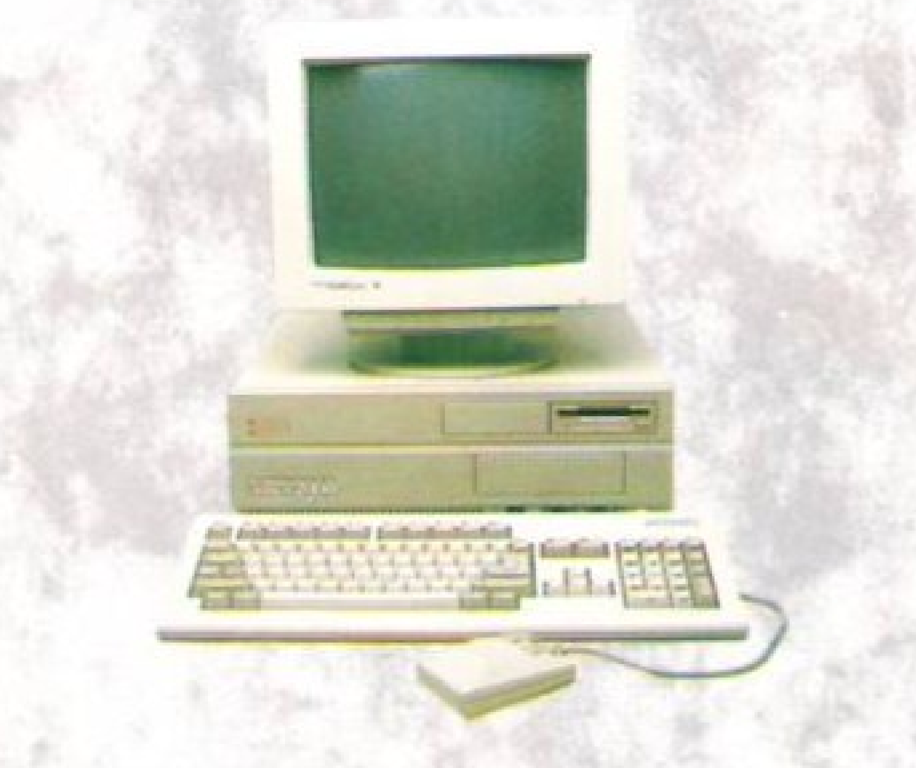
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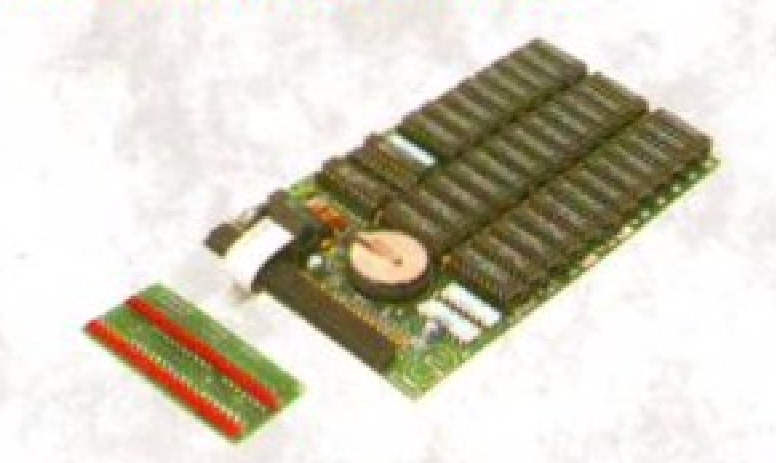
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It's The Real Thing

Real 3D is the first of three new, innovative 3D modelling systems that will hit the Amiga soon. **Brian Larkman** checks it out and finds that it raises questions about where 3D modelling will go next...

Suddenly, the Amiga graphics scene is taking off. The sharp end of computer graphics at the moment is realistic 3D animation – and in this area, developments on the Amiga could keep pace with the professional market, where the Apple Mac is a standard 'low-cost' system.

But before the Amiga can really be a contender, it needs one thing – a rendering standard which will make all the different modelling packages compatible. Just as the PostScript page description language transformed DTP by providing a coherent standard, so a common, compatible system could revolutionise 3D scene description on the Amiga.

The Macintosh already has such a standard. Developed over many years by Pixar (famous for their playful animations such as *Tin Toy* and *Red's Dream*) RenderMan is just such an interface. It is now common across many formats and is making a particular impact on the Mac market.

Send for RenderMan!

Although Pixar do market their own rendering programs, the RenderMan interface is actually a standard way to transfer descriptions of scenes from modeller to renderer. Pixar have made RenderMan available to other developers – at a price – and have produced strict guidelines in order to maintain compatibility.

RenderMan uses its own unique file format – RenderMan Interface Bytestream, or RIB – to transfer scene data. The RIB system uses two specific types of graphics primitives to construct its three-dimensional scenes: 'solid modelled' quadratic surfaces (which are like those used by *Real 3D*, described below) and parametric surfaces or 'surface patches'. This is far superior to the faceted surfaces used by most Amiga packages, which for curved surfaces can only ever be an approximation.

Renderman at Work

Using RenderMan, surface qualities of objects are defined by 'Shaders'. A surface can have a huge number of qualities adjusted including the colour, intensity and diffusion of light; roughness, texture, bumps; transparency, reflectiveness, refractive index and atmospheric effects.

On the Mac, most RenderMan software uses a Material requester to set up, with sliders and buttons, a library of appropriate material ready to be applied to objects. A similar method is used by *Real 3D*.

Once the solid objects are ready, the scene must be viewed – photographed, if you like – by a virtual camera. The RenderMan spec insists that this camera must be quite sophisticated, capable of being focused, with variable lenses, timed exposures etc. In this area *Real 3D* is rather weak by comparison, using a basic pin-hole camera.

By Comparison: Real 3D

As far as innovation goes, *Real 3D* is one of the most unusual packages around. It's a true solid modeller, producing properly smoothed curved surfaces. *Real 3D* calls its modelling method 'Solid Modelling' because it seems to emulate solid objects.

No, this is not an Amiga image. This is a still from the *Tin Toy* animation, created by Pixar using their very own rendering system, RenderMan. RenderMan is not just a piece of software: it is a whole standard, which promises to make 3D modelling take off in a big way on the Apple Macintosh. This month's review package, Real 3D, takes Amiga 3D modelling a step further: but the question now is, can the Amiga compete without adopting the RenderMan standard?

BELOW: This is *Real 3D*, this month's review package. Just a brief glimpse of what it can do, here – for the full story, read on!



In fact the various primitives are 'quadratic' surfaces, 3D graphs of mathematical functions, created by sweeping 2D curves or lines through 3D space. A circle swept through 180 degrees makes a sphere, or a line swept around an axis by 360 degrees creates a cylinder.

Each of the solid 3D primitives – pyramid, prism, cuboid, sphere, cone, cylinder and hyperboloid (like a section through a pulley wheel) – is a perfect, geometric, solid block. Each can be cut, drilled, glued and distorted, just like real blocks of plastic, metal, wood or stone.

More complex objects are made up by adding these simple shapes together or using one as a tool to remove material from the other. For example, a cylinder can be used on a sphere to cut a cylindrical hole, or two spheres can be used only where they overlap, leaving a lens shape.

This way of working is immensely powerful for engineers or product designers because it simulates the way real fabrication processes work. Though it is rather limited for more freeform 'organic' shapes, with a bit of ingenuity almost any man-made shape can be formed. In fact half the fun is puzzling out how to produce the shape that you want.

Tool Power

To help you get that shape, there are tools to enable 'composite' objects to be constructed automatically from

Continued overleaf ▸

appropriate primitives. The 'lathe' tool produces perfectly 'turned' objects from a series of straight lines defining the profile; rectangular or circular cross section tubes will follow any zig-zag path enabling instant neon signs; a 'fence' tool makes hollow extruded forms; and a 'pixel' tool turns each pixel of an imported bitmap into the primitive of your choice – a unique tool, perfect for 'SuperBowl' type illuminated displays.

Useful as these 'composite' tools are, more are needed or, better still, a facility to make your own. Computer graphic designers would thrive on the chance to invent new tools if it was made easy for them.

In future versions of *Real 3D* it would be nice to see a modular approach taken to adding features – 'plug-in' tools might be designed for specific applications. *Real 3D* does go part of the way, with a Macro facility. With macro turned on each action is recorded, so a complex cloning and transformation operation can be used repeatedly as if it were a custom tool. The only drawback is that Macros cannot be saved.

More Suggestions

Other possibilities on a modelling wish-list include a torus primitive and parametric surfaces or 'patches' such as bezier splines and NURBs (unlikely)! Patches would be a very important addition because they are a requirement of the full implementation of the RenderMan spec.



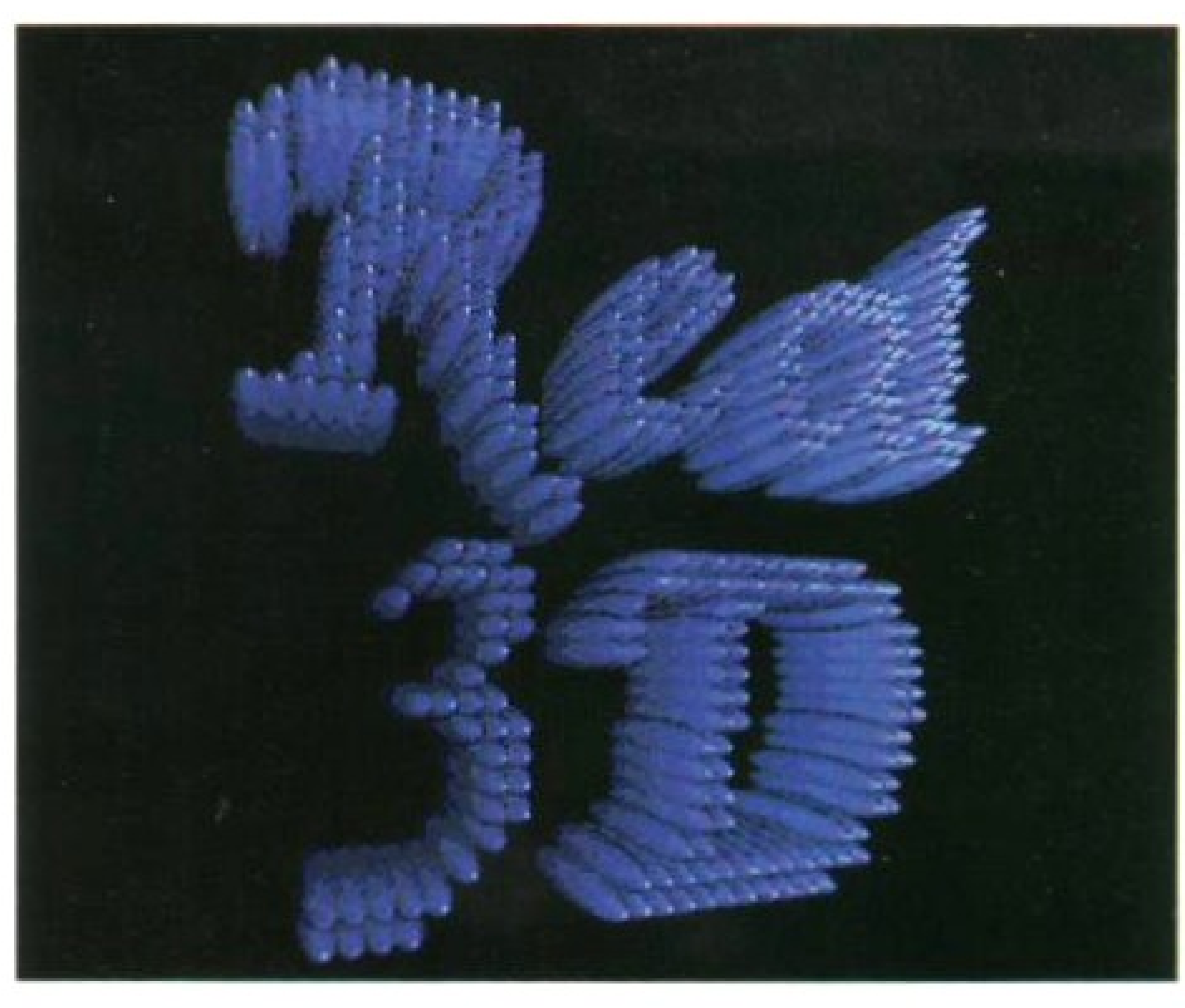
LEFT: The problems that *Real 3D* has with dithering are exaggerated here on the coloured balls because this picture has been processed to only 32 colours. Nevertheless, there are some reservations about its capacity for dithering.

Of course, all these objects could be tediously constructed by hand from primitive planes and objects – just as individual points, lines and facets can be used to construct complex objects in *Sculpt* or *Silver*. No-one ever actually does this, though.

In any case, to get the best out of a solid modelling environment requires that a new way of thinking is developed that is more akin to traditional engineering or sculpture, where material is removed to reveal the required object as well as the more traditional distortion of a plastic material into the required shape.

Animation

Animation is fundamental to *Real 3D*. The basic data structure of the program is such that even a single object created in the Editor is in effect a one-frame animation. As frames are created or modified, the existing parameters and objects are copied to all the following frames, ready to be modified again. In this way it is an easy matter to change the frames progressively to create an animation. To help with the work a number of tools are provided:



ABOVE: A unique and rather exciting tool in *Real 3D* allows you to make every pixel of an imported bitmap – in this case the *Real 3D* logo – into an object. The effect is rather akin to the kind of illuminated display used at American sports grounds.

- Any selected object can be given an 'orbit' or freehand path along which it will pass in a set number of frames.

- Each object can be assigned any degree of rotation around a given point over a set number of frames.

- The macro facility can be used to execute a number of actions repeatedly over any series of frames.

Each of these tools is additive: a different path and rotation can be set for an object in each projection, making complex choreography possible. Unfortunately the effectiveness of the path tool is limited because there is no option to keep objects pointing automatically in the direction of movement. Careful use of the rotation tool can achieve this effect, but the effort required defeats the idea of automating the animation process.

Hierarchies

As objects are created in the modeller, they are positioned in a 'nested' hierarchy much like the DOS hierarchy of files and drawers. This is vital for true animation so that parts of an object can be moved and animated separately – arm, hand, finger, joint.

The observer and target can also be animated but they cannot be attached to objects. To follow an object along a complex path, the aim point and observer must each be given similar paths – sometimes a difficult job. To make this easier it is possible to set the aim point to the same direction as the observer is moving but, for example, sitting above an aircraft and looking down at it as if from a spotter-plane must be set up manually. Attaching observer and aim-point to the plane would have been much simpler.

Getting Friendly

The simplest way to animate in *Real 3D* is to fly the observer around an object using the interactive wireframe editor. Using continuous recording, all movements are logged. This can produce rather jerky animations but it is very easy to set up and can give a hand-held camera effect.

A logical development of this might be to use *StarGlider II*-style mouse plus keyboard controls, to fly through a whole environment recording the moves. This would be the most interactive and user-friendly interface of all. Even without this option, *Real 3D* is very friendly to animators as long as they don't want to do anything too accurately.

The only way to repeat a move is to save the animation whole and load it back. This method can be adapted to allow several objects to make the same moves because animated objects can be superimposed over animated sequences as well as join onto the end of them.

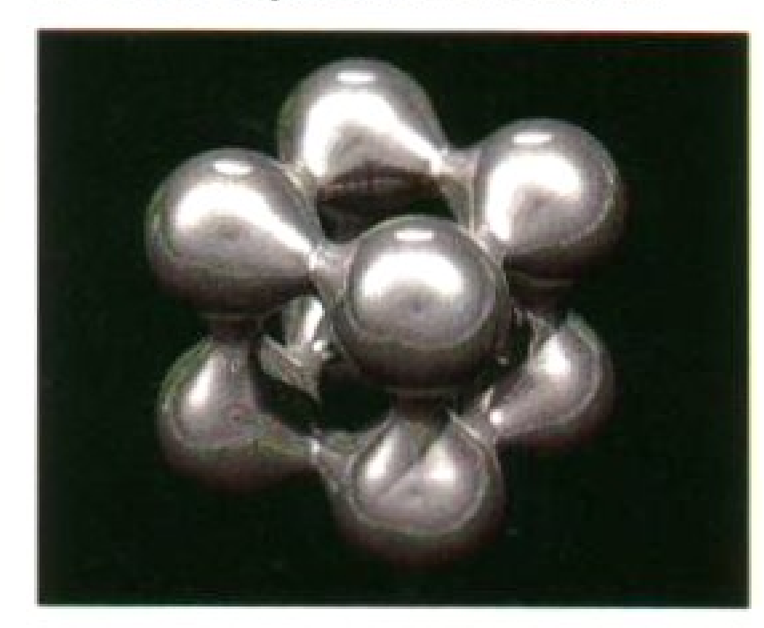
RENDERING

In some ways, the rendering of *Real 3D* is the most disappointing aspect. True, it is amazingly fast because it uses smoothly-curved quadratic surfaces instead of thousands of flat facets to model objects. The final result is much more realistic-looking, especially when viewing curved objects in profile.

Also, theoretically, by using a materials library, an object can be imbued with the characteristics of any material, real or imagined. The material parameters such as reflectivity, transparency, refractive index, colour, IFF texture map etc. are set up in a separate requester and saved to the library, named accordingly (Rusty Steel, Polished Walnut, Semi-matt Red Plastic). This is far better than the hit or miss application of values to an object as it is rendered.

RIGHT: Examples of the use of a limited palette – in other words, a number of greyscales – to imitate technical modelling illustrate well the potential that *Real 3D* has for design and modelling functions. Because the shapes are real and solid, it is a very literal reproduction of the way design engineers work.





That is the theory, but in practise the rendered objects are difficult to relate to their respective 'materials'. The rendering algorithms just do not seem to be able to create subtle enough variations in the dithering, reflections and highlights.

Dithering, for instance is quite curious, imposing a linear, horizontal pattern over the dithered objects as well as blending the colours smoothly. Lighting may also cause problems. To get highlights it is neccessary to create a matt glass diffuser globe around the light-source because it is not an object. Getting the correct size and surface qualities of this right is a research job on its own that should really be taken care of by the program.

Back to Renderman

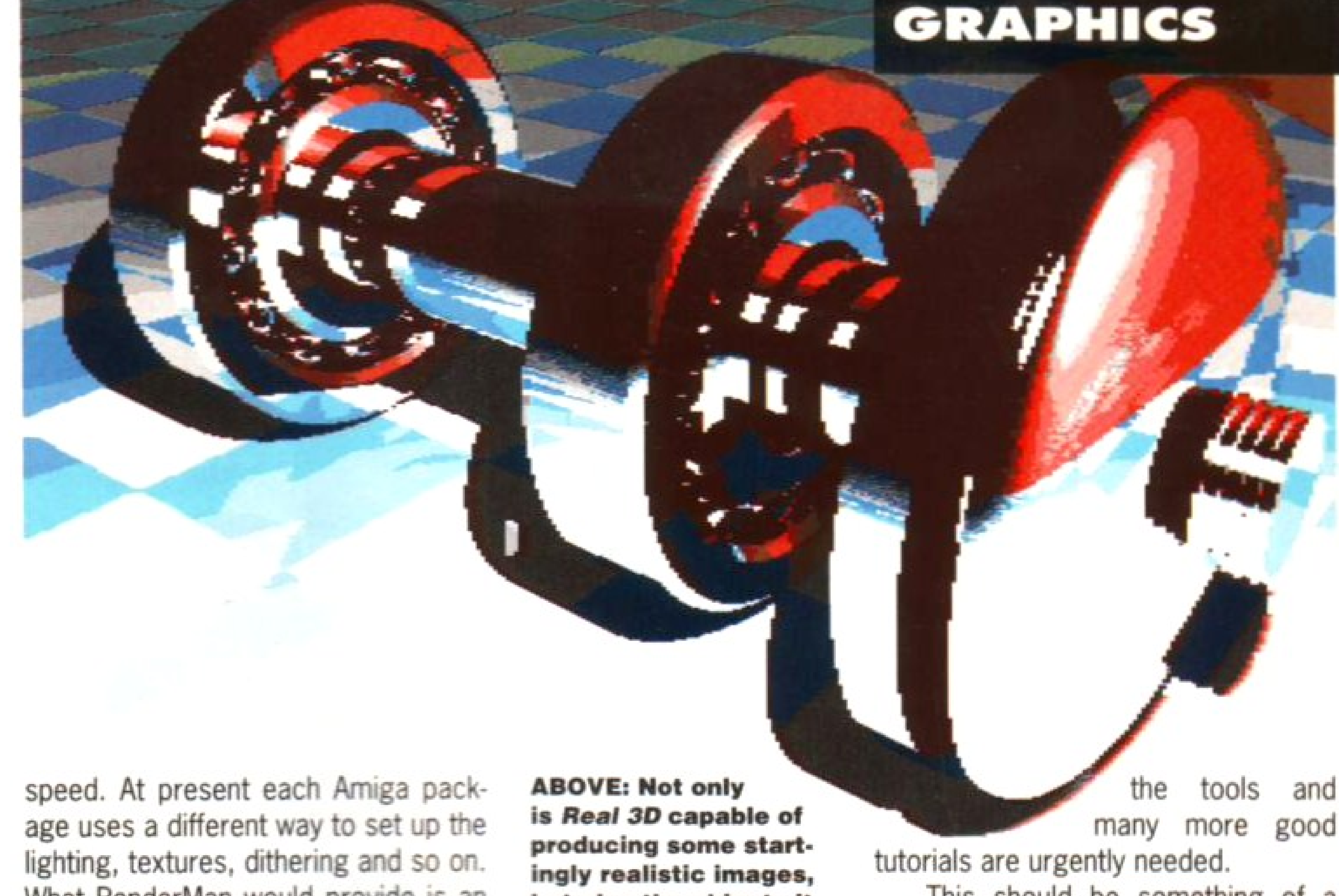
Real 3D comes closer than any other Amiga 3D software has previously to fulfilling the requirements of Pixar's RenderMan spec. Since RenderMan looks set to become the standard interface for photorealistic rendering across most computer systems in the near future, just as PostScript is the standard page description system, the Amiga must have software capable of outputting RenderMan RIB data if it is to be taken seriously in the graphics marketplace. *Real 3D* looks like the best bet at the moment.

The importance of RenderMan is emphasised by the indifferent rendering capabilities of most Amiga software – and *Real 3D* is not really any exception, apart from its amazing speed. At present each Amiga package uses a different way to set up the lighting, textures, dithering and so on. What RenderMan would provide is an excellent standard of rendering, taking care of each of these variables, leaving the software writers to concentrate on the modelling interface and tools.

CONCLUSION

Make no mistake, *Real 3D* is a superb piece of software. It allows objects to be constructed in a realistic, accurate way, animated easily and rendered astonishingly quickly. It is certainly more innovative and faster than any other system yet seen. But it is also lacking some important degrees of control, adaptability and overall completeness. Also the manual is only barely adequate for software at this price. Much fuller descriptions of all the tools and many more good tutorials are urgently needed.

This should be something of a turning point in the development of software as we all become more aware of the potential of 24-bit images, RenderMan rendering on the Mac and PC and the relative shortcomings of Amiga software. It is essential that the Amiga keeps up, at least in terms of innovation if not raw computing power. If *Real 3D* is developed as it should be, it will be the leading package – it has the potential.



ABOVE: Not only is *Real 3D* capable of producing some startingly realistic images, but also the objects it creates are, mathematically speaking, real. Each of the primitives that make up this ball race is constructed as a solid shell using extremely advanced mathematical techniques.

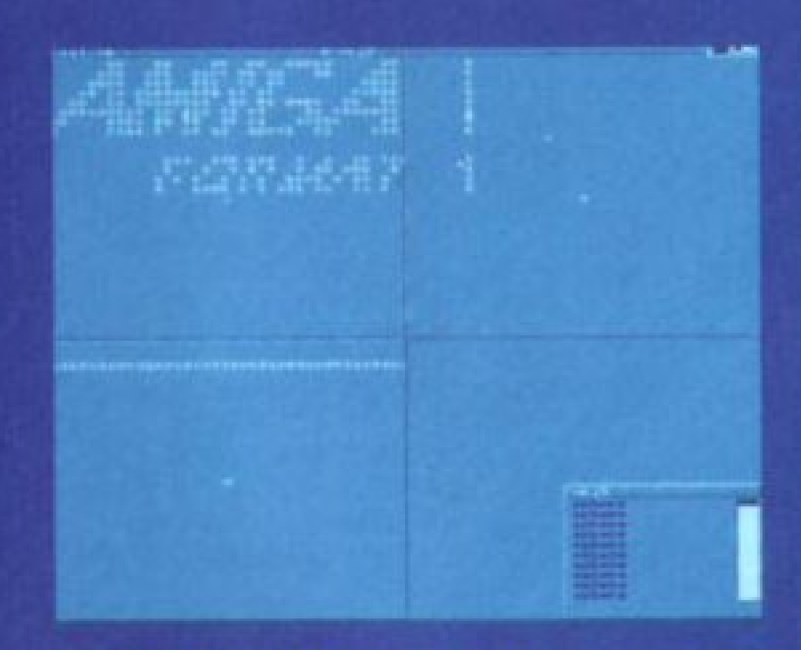
An examination of current competition in ray-tracing packages and what we can expect to see in the near future follows on p149 ▸

REAL 3D

Amiga Centre Scotland 031 557 4242 ■ *Beginner's* £113.83 (for less than 1Meg, has no Boolean or Macros) ■ *Professional* £343.85 (the version reviewed, 3Meg) *Turbo* £435.85 (supports 68020/030)

THE INTERFACE

The *Real 3D* interface uses three windows or modules to do its work; a 'Tri-View' Editor, the WireFrame 'viewing' window, and the Solid Model 'Renderer' control panel. Overall the interface is intuitive and well thought out, easy to learn and easy to use.

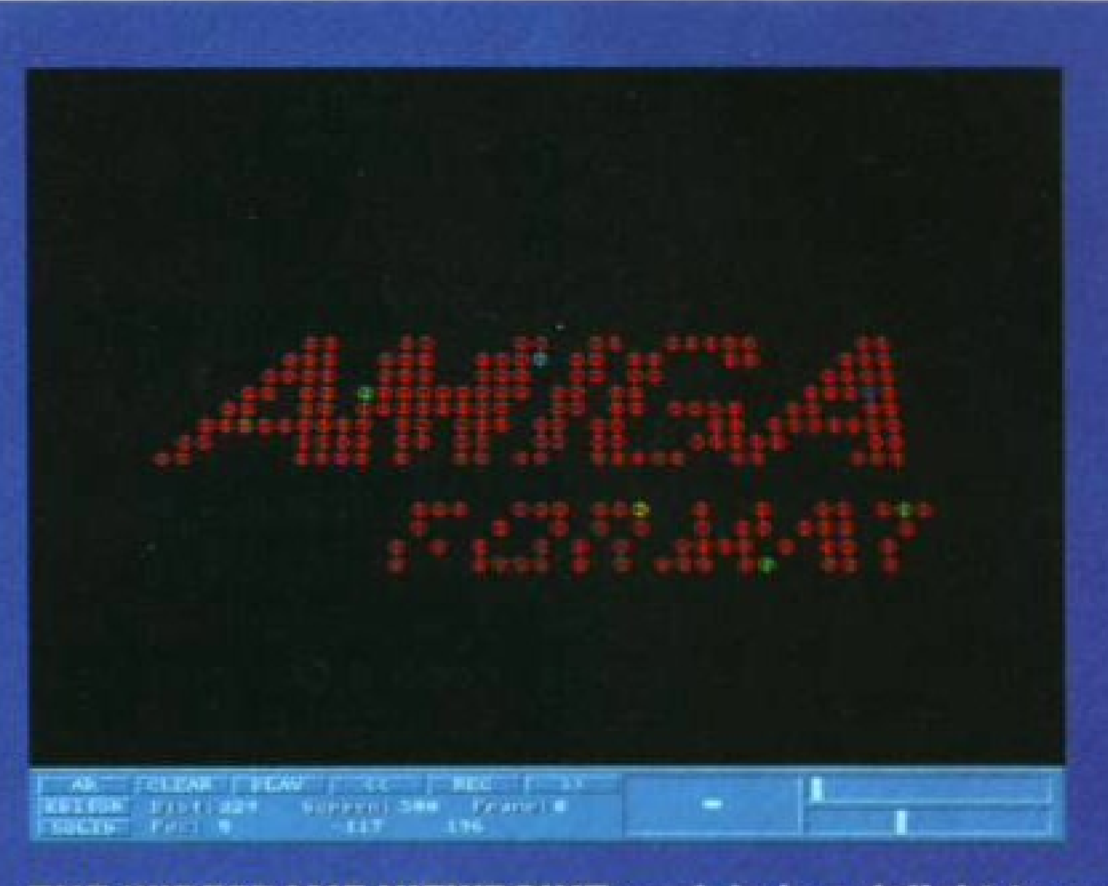


THE EDITOR has the standard three elevations, front, end and plan, kept almost completely free of detail to keep update times to a minimum and maintaining the maximum chip memory. Nevertheless it manages to look quite classy.

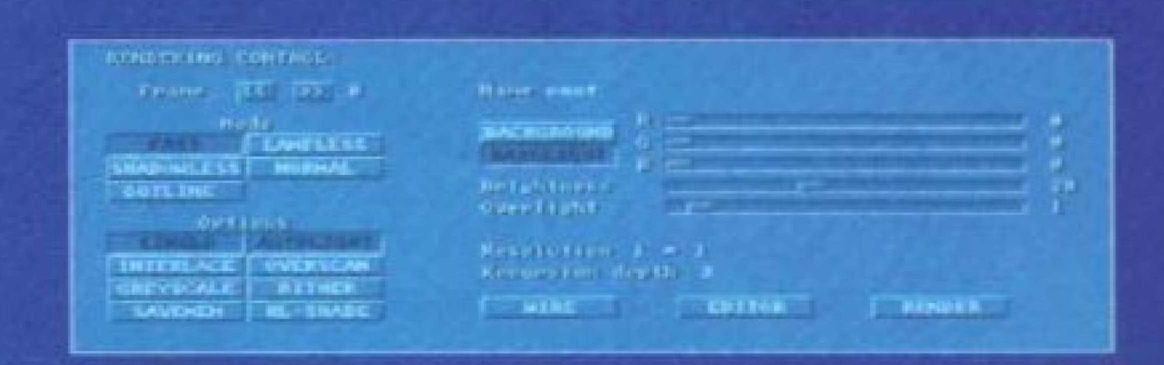
A fourth 'Selection' window displays the section of the object hierarchy that is currently selected and 'active', allowing easy access to any object, just by clicking on its name.

This method of selection is beautifully simple and easy to use, the best I have seen, though it is perhaps a little small. It would be nice if it could be enlarged or a tree diagram displayed when required. The other windows can be displayed next to each other, or enlarged and overlapping.

All tools and functions are accessed via pull-down menus or keypresses; no icons are used. Some people may find this a pity - icons do help the novice user to get aclimatised to the system, and menus can be very slow, especially when there are not always keyboard equivalents as in this case. Hot-keys would have been very useful. Icons do use up chip memory, though!



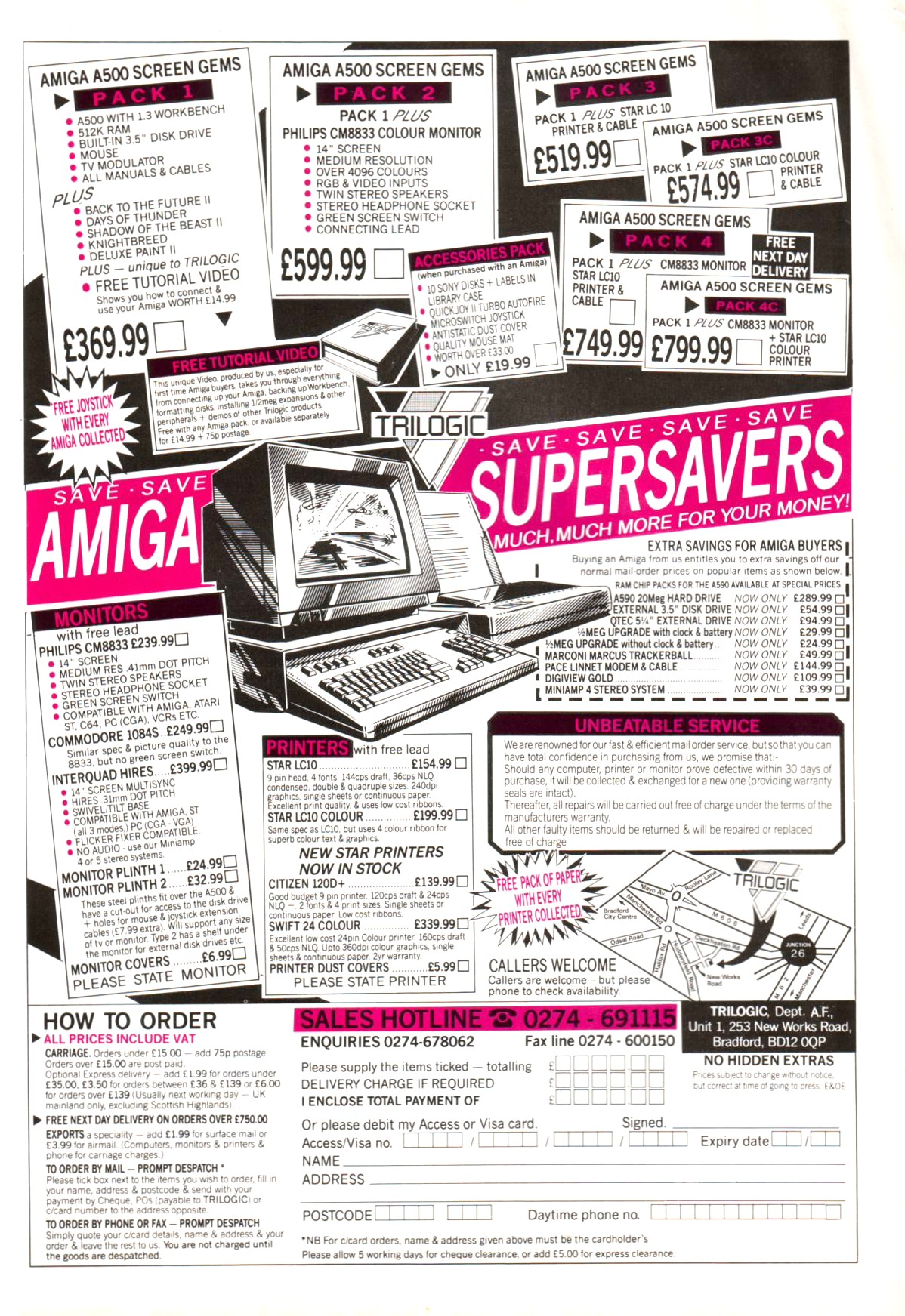
THE WIREFRAME VIEWPOINT module is a delight to use, making interactive, almost real-time updates as the observer moves around the scene and zooms in and out. No editing is possible in this module however, so no *Caligari* or *LightWave* style interactive transformations of objects. Instead, the mouse controlled moves can be recorded and used for animation as described in the main text.



THE SOLID MODEL CONTROL PANEL provides control over all of the global rendering parameters; resolution, overscan, greyscale, dithering, render type, light level, etc. It uses simple buttons in the current pseudo-3D style of Workbench 2.0, plus RGB sliders for ambient and background light intensity



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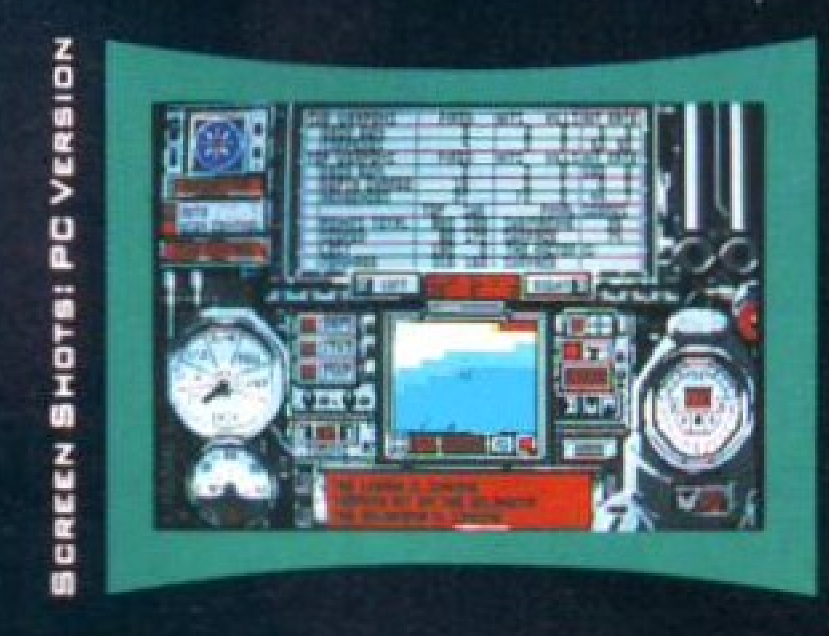
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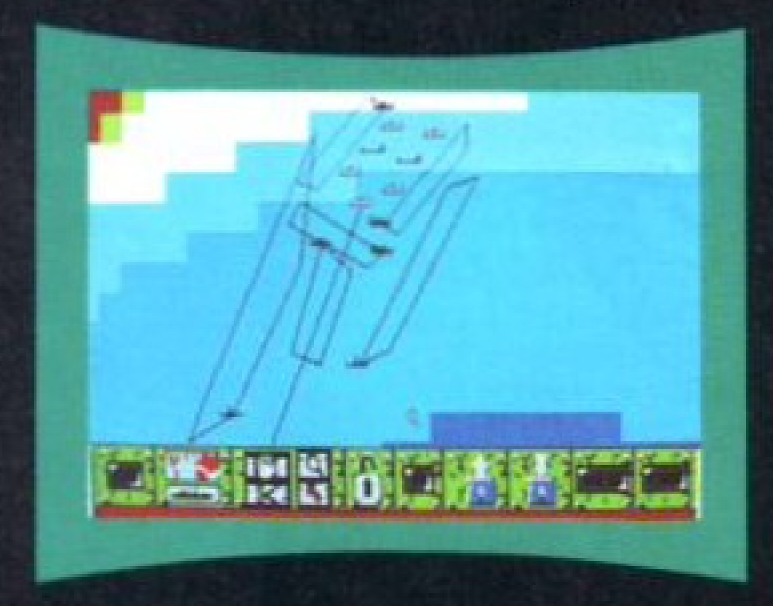
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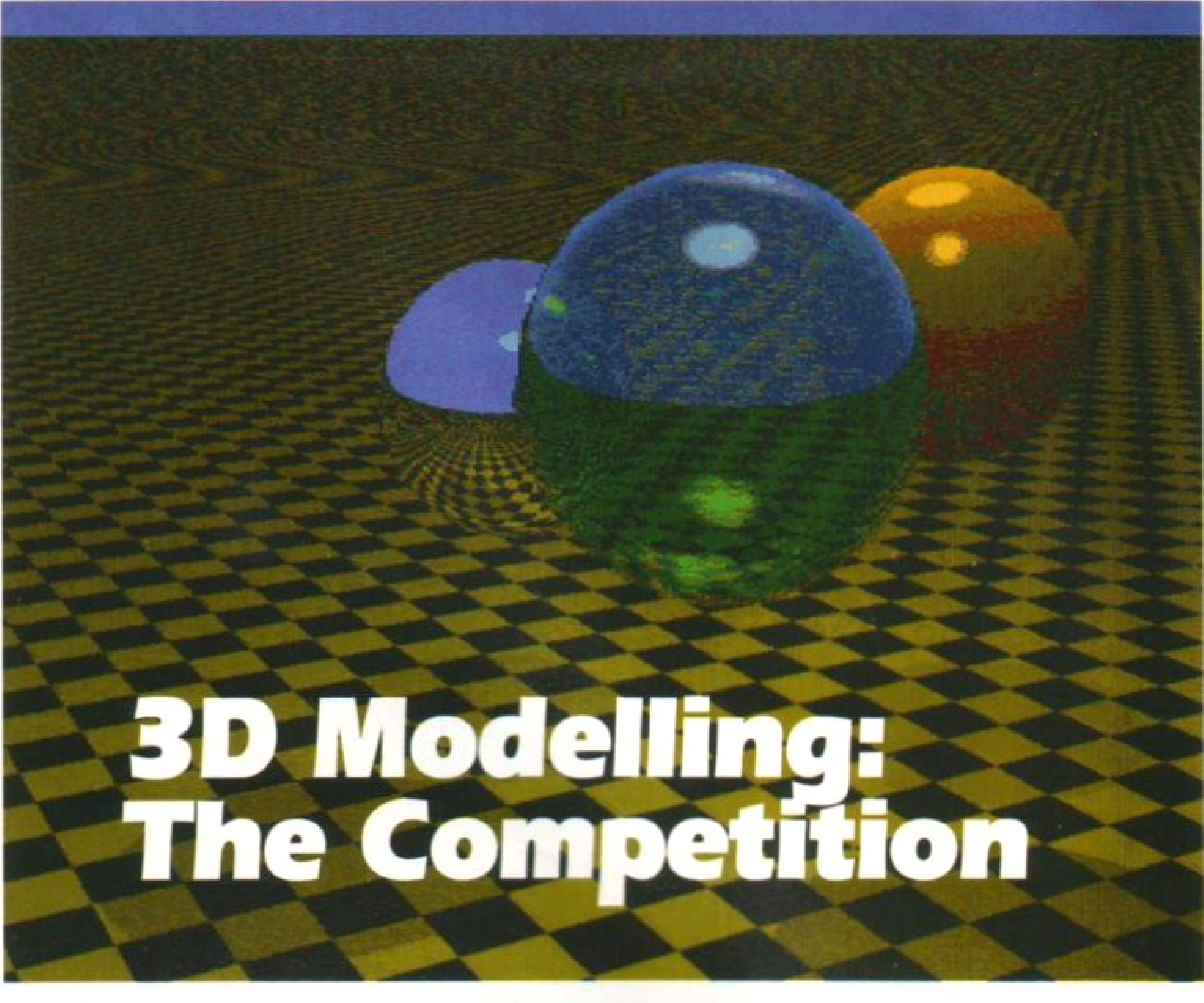
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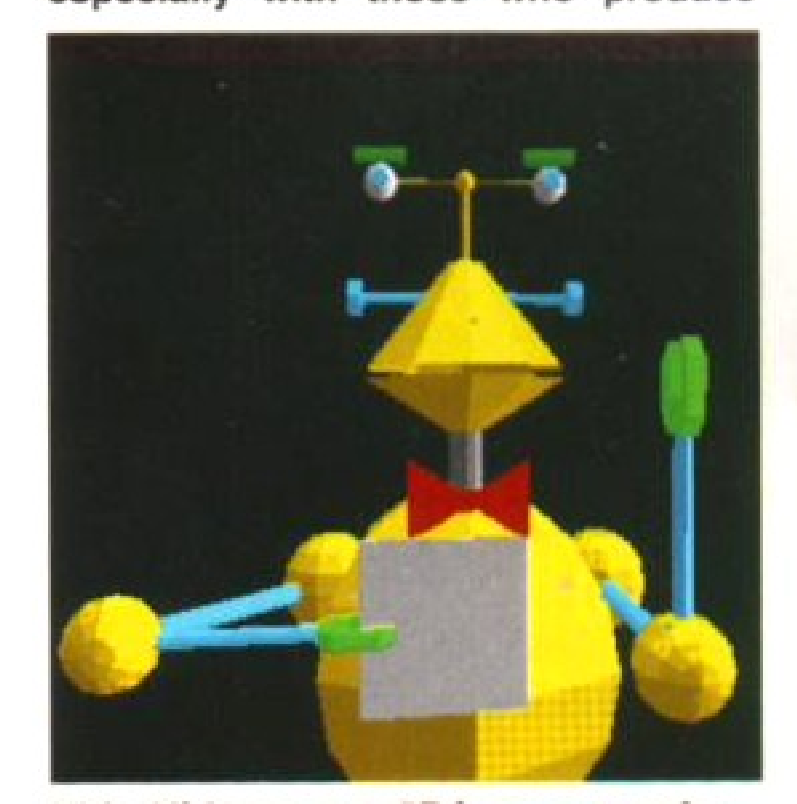
3D Modelling: The Competition

So how does *Real 3D* shape up as an Amiga package? Well, considering the raw power of the three best-established Amiga modelling and rendering systems – *Sculpt 4D, Videoscape 3D* and *Turbo Silver* – and the quality of the images they produce, any new package has to have some quite amazing features to compete.

Put simply, a new pretender to the throne has to be faster, more innovative, more effective, a great deal easier to use and cheaper – and it would also have to be very lucky. *Real 3D* certainly has the first two, speed and innovation – but the jury is still out on the others.

SCULPT-ANIMATE 4D: Currently a favourite with many graphics power users, including our own graphics editor, mainly for its wealth of modelling parameters and relatively straightforward interface. It is still a complex and heavyweight package. About £350 Amiga Centre Scotland 031 557 4242.

VIDEOSCAPE 3D: This was the very first Amiga 3D animation package. Seems to be extremely popular still, especially with those who produce demos for the Public Domain, coming in at a lower price and having much the same power, even though it is less accessible at first. Around £140 Varous Suppliers.



This *Videoscape 3D* image may be familiar: it was created by Alternative Image of Leicester.

LIGHTWAVE3D: The surprise inclusion of this powerful, 24-bit colour 3D modelling and rendering system with NewTek's Video Toaster has really upped the stakes in the 3D software market. By all accounts this new package, written by *VideoScape* Author Allen Hastings, could set the standards for 3D over the next few years. The Video Toaster is not yet available in a PAL version so there are no release details for this country.

3D PROFESSIONAL: From Progressive Peripherals and Software in the States, this is currently a 3D modelling system but not a full ray-tracing package. The ray-tracing part will appear as an upgrade shortly. So far, 3D Professional has not been looked at in *Amiga Format* because the UK distributor has failed to send us a copy. £299 Marcam 081 941 6117.

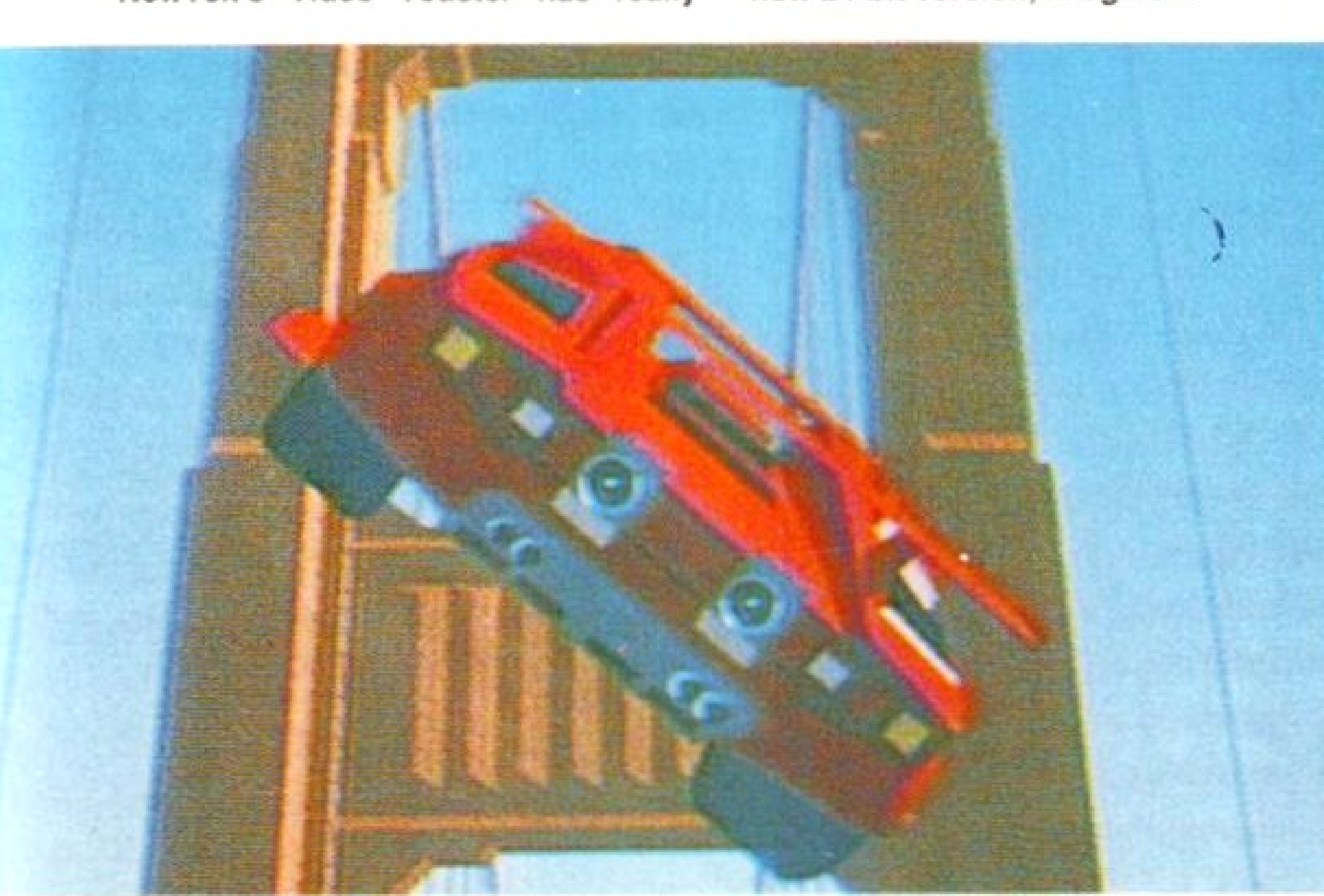
TURBO SILVER: Managed to hide its light under a bushel for a long time, but has recently emerged as an *Amiga Format* favourite (see Graphics, Issues 13 and 14). A powerful package again, but it may be worth your while hanging on for the brand-new 24-bit version, *Imagine*...



If you are a keen Mac user as well as an Amiga graphics fan, you may like to know that *MacRenderMan*, used to develop the *Tin Toy* image on the first page of this article, is now available in this country priced £695 from Computers Unlimited, telephone 081 200 8282.

IMAGINE: Possibly the most exciting news of late is that Impulse are just about to release *Imagine*, an upgraded and rewritten version of *Turbo Silver*. If the rumours are true, this new program will not only include 24-bit rendering, but will also be the first Amiga program to boast the RenderMan interface. Let's hope so – this could be where the Amiga joins the big league. Price as yet unknown but will be available from Precision 081 330 7166.

It seems that the old guard – *Videoscape, Sculpt-Animate 4D* and *Turbo Silver* – may well be ousted by the innovative new boys. Certainly, the mathematics of solid modelling behind *Real 3D* are a step ahead of the previous faceted systems. Now we just have to hold our breath and hope that *Imagine* will make the big breakthrough. We have just received news that it is ready and waiting, so wait for it to be reviewed soon. The Amiga graphics scene is now taking off, and *Amiga Format* will be there! ■



LEFT: *Lightwave 3D* remains an unknown quantity. Its surprise release as part of the Video Toaster system has had quite quite an impact in the States, but until a PAL version of the Toaster appears, we are unlikely to see this 24-bit modelling package in this country.

RIGHT: This is *Turbo Silver* at one of its most basic functions, mapping a bitmap onto a 3D object. The new, rewritten version, *Imagine*, promises to be all you could wish – but will it be? Find out soon...



Deluxe Paint 3 Masterclass

In the third Special Effects tutorial, a way of unrolling pictures before your eyes is explained by **DEAN AGAR.**

This effect will give the impression that your artwork is rolling down the screen. The example given is intended to run on a 1 Meg machine using the *Play* program. It is perfectly possible, if you have more memory, to get this effect to look very professional by having the full screen rolling down. Once you have completed the example you will be able to adapt it to your own needs and change it from a straightforward effect into something a little more special.

1 Load up your chosen picture.

2 To conserve memory, select the 'filled rectangle' tool and remove a strip of the image 50 pixels wide from the left and the right-hand sides.

3 Set the number of animation frames to 25.

4 Using the cursor keys, make sure you can see the top of the picture while keeping the menu. You'll need the menu for the coordinates.

5 Press J to swap to the spare screen and draw a rectangle 220 pixels wide by 35 pixels high, in a contrasting colour - one not used in your original picture. In this case, the colour is white.

6 Pick the rectangle up as a brush and return to frame 1 by pressing J again.

7 Copy image to spare screen. This is needed later.

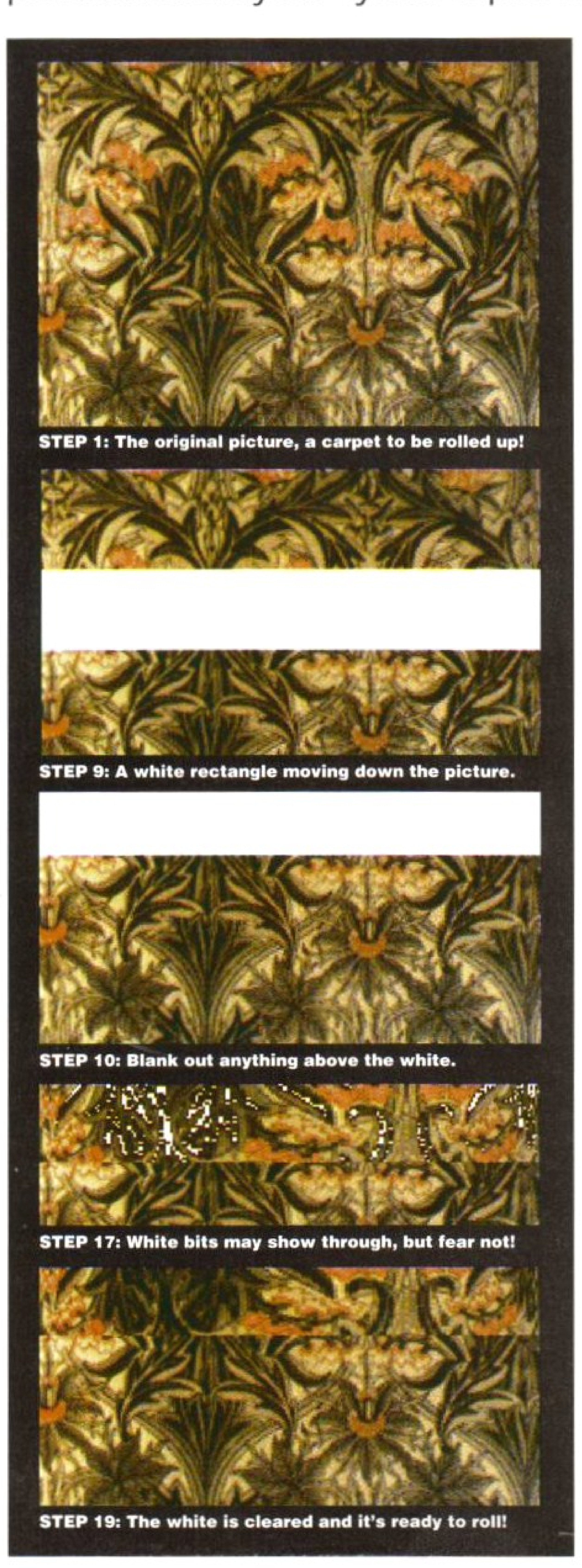
8 Stamp down the rectangle at the top, in line with the edges.

9 Bring up the 'move' requester. Type -220 into Y's distance and preview. You should see the rectangle move down the screen. If so, select 'draw' when the requester reappears. You now have a white rectangle moving down your picture.

10 Go to frame 2. You need to blank out any picture showing above the white rectangle on every frame. Use the filled rectangle with your selected background colour to do this, but be careful not to remove any of the rectangle.

11 Set the anim rate to 15 frames per second and press 6 on the keyboard to view what you have done so far. If you have a white rectangle running down then up the screen, removing and replacing as it does so, then you have done everything correctly. If not, you should run through the steps again and try to find your mistake.

12 Using the cursor keys again, adjust the picture so that you can see the top while the menu is present. You will also need to align the anim picture and the scratch screen. Use J to swap between the two to check the alignment.



STEP 1: The original picture, a carpet to be rolled up!

STEP 9: A white rectangle moving down the picture.

STEP 10: Blank out anything above the white.

STEP 17: White bits may show through, but fear not!

STEP 19: The white is cleared and it's ready to roll!

13 Go to frame 1.

14 Select the pick-up tool and position the centre of the cross-hairs at the top left-hand corner of the white rectangle. Keep the mouse still and press J. Now pick up the picture at full width and 25 pixels depth: you will have to be accurate right to the single pixel to the edge of the picture, ensuring you don't pick up any background.

15 Press Y on the keyboard. If you omit this, it looks odd.

16 Bring up the 'fill' requester by selecting the fill tool with the right-hand mouse button. When the requester appears click on 'from brush' and the brush should appear in the window. Then click 'wrap' and OK.

17 Press J and then fill the white rectangle. If you have any white showing through do not worry, since this is corrected last.

18 Press 2 on the keyboard to progress to the next frame and begin again at Step 14. Repeat until you have completed frame 25.

19 After all that work, you probably can't wait to see your finished animation. First, though, we need to get rid of all the white marks, and there are two ways to do this.

First, select the 'stencil'. Click on the colour 'white', click 'invert' and finally click 'make'. You will now find you can draw on screen and it only shows up on the white areas. Then simply flip through the frames and paint out the white in an appropriate colour. Make sure that if you use the fill tool to paint it out that you change the fill requester to 'solid'.

Alternatively, press P to bring up the palette requestor, select the white and change its colour to a suitable one. This can have the effect of changing the menu colours, so you will have to experiment.

20 Now press 6 on the keyboard and you can view the finished animation. ■

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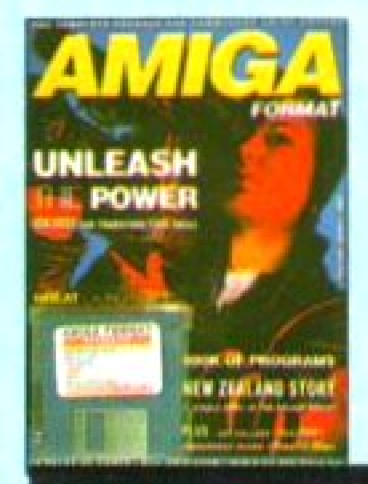
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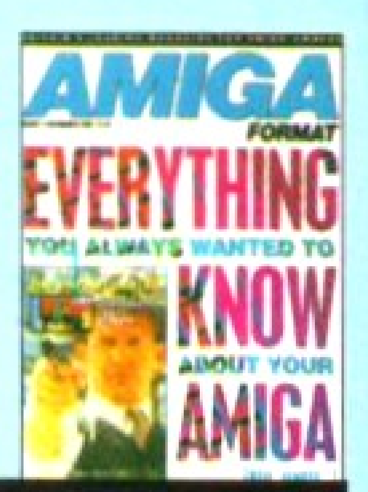
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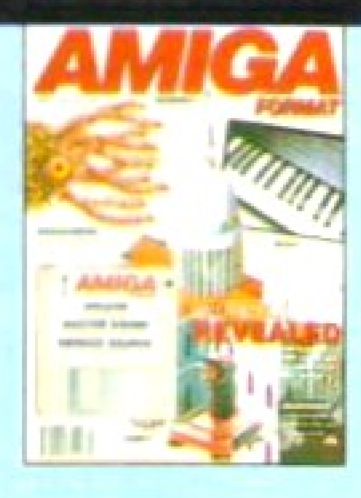


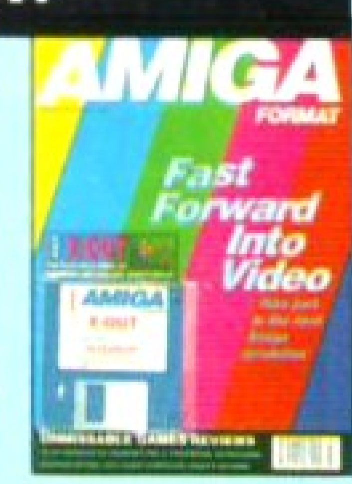


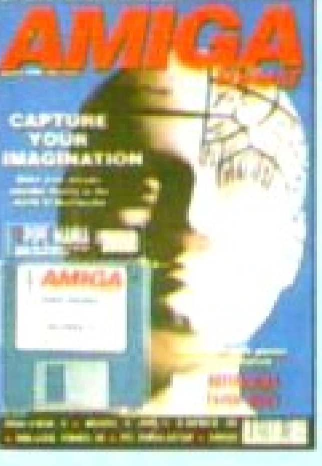
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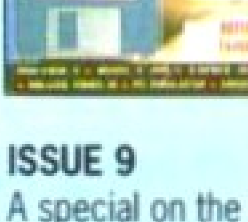


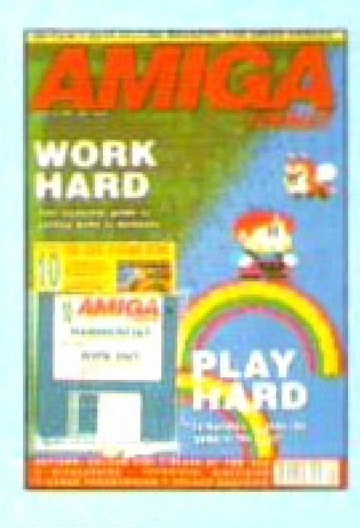




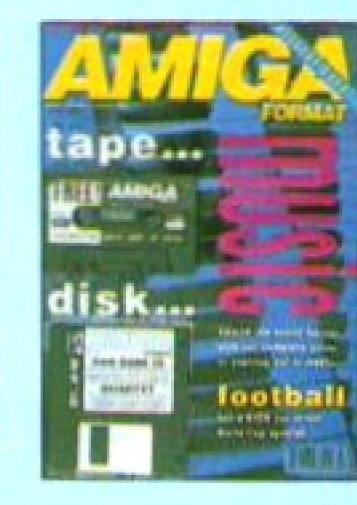










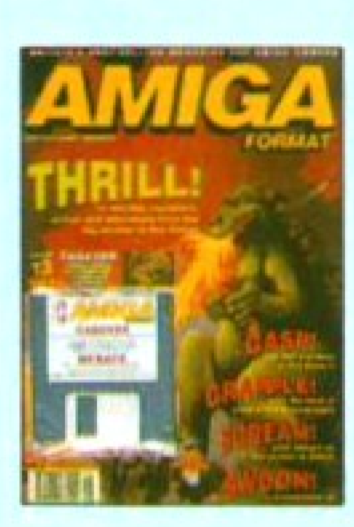


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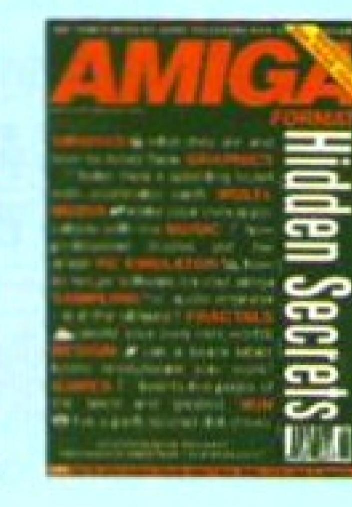
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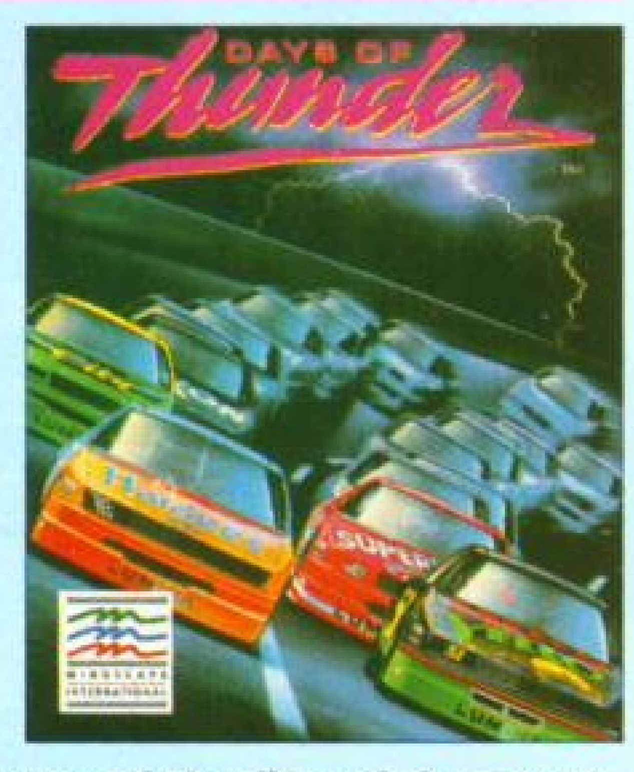
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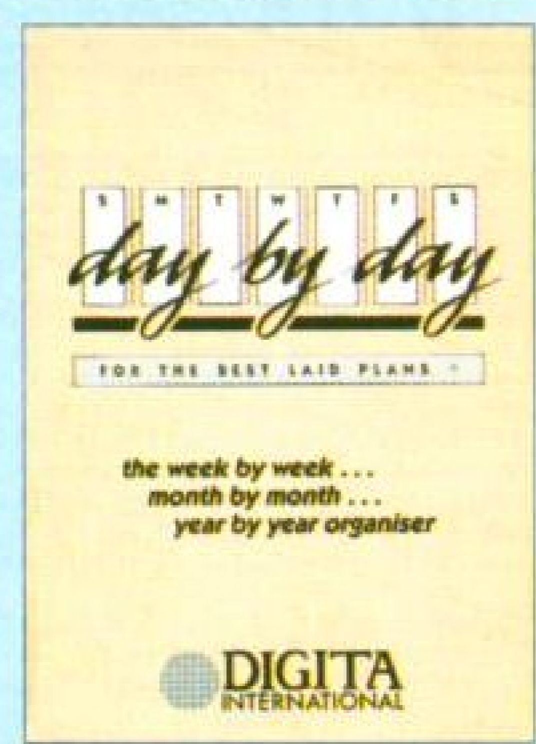


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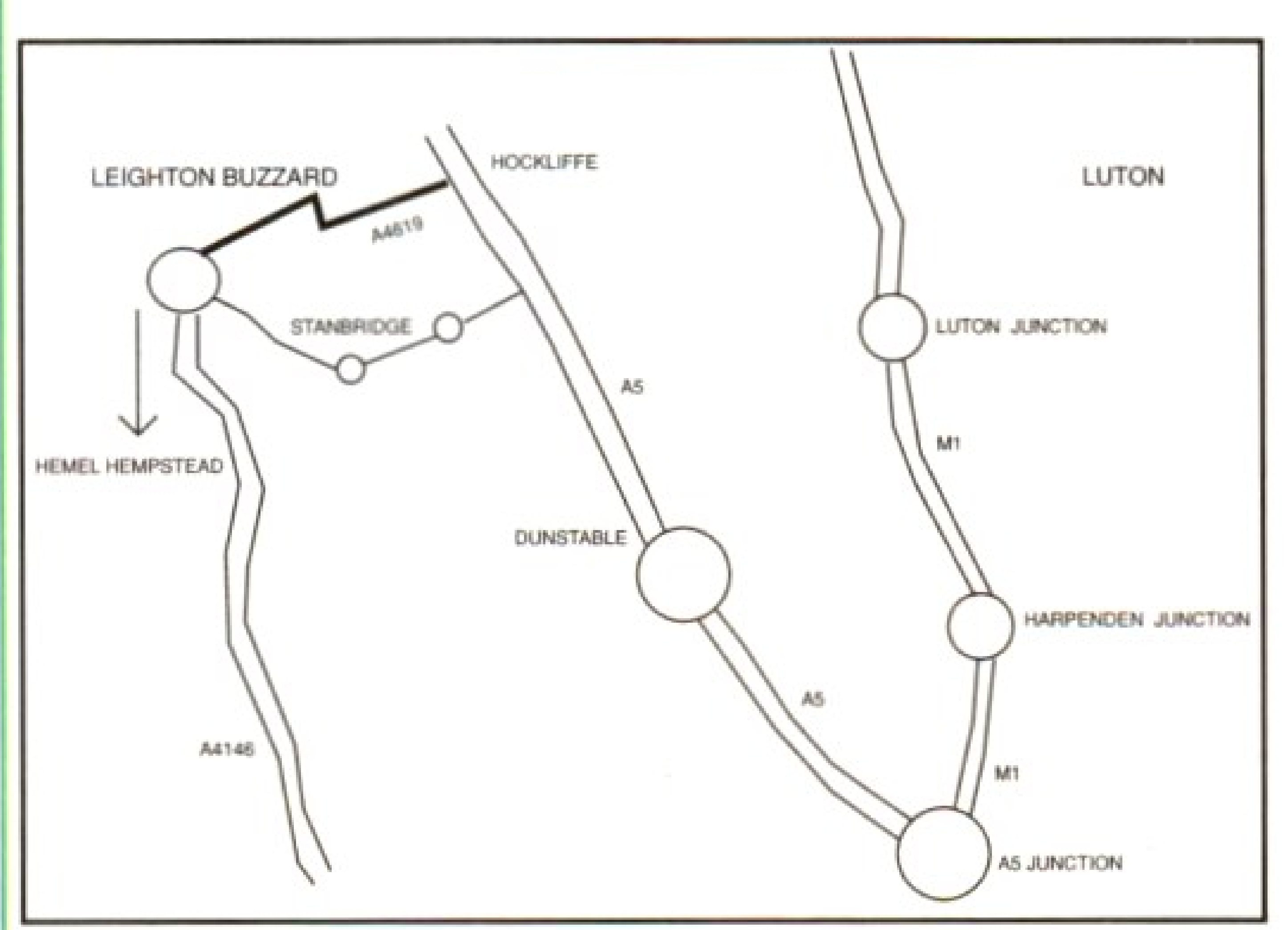
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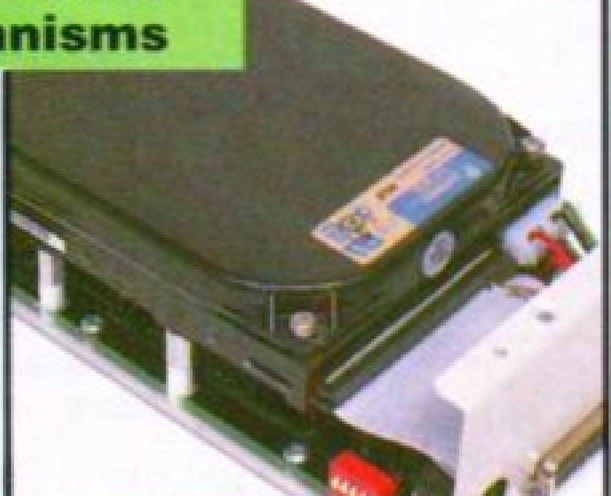


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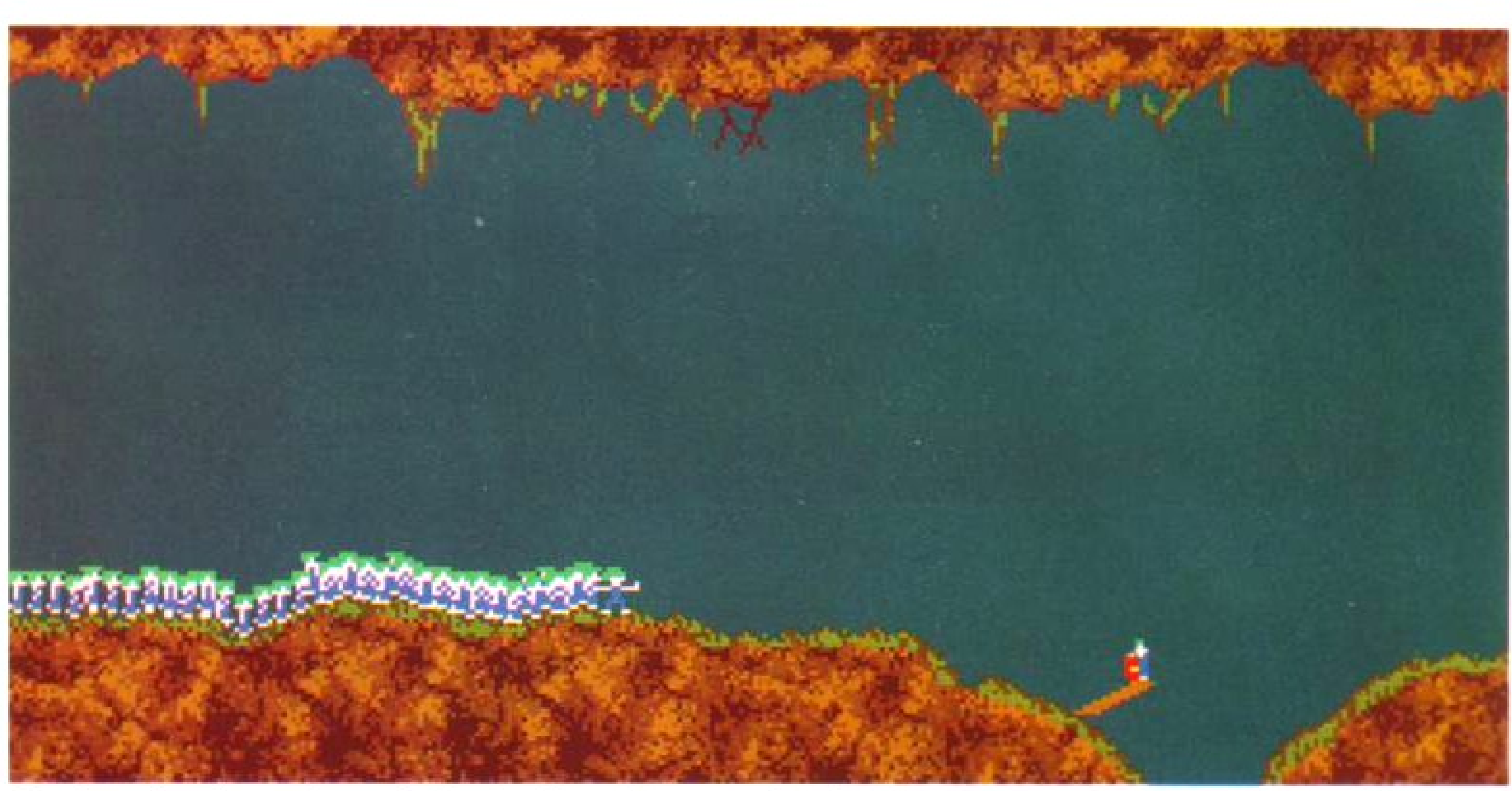
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COVER DISK

Talk about Christmas presents! As well *Interphase*, the complete full-price game, there's two excellent big-name demos, a complete PD game and lots more on two easy-to-use disks! PAT McDONALD explains.

LEMMINGS

PSYGNOSIS



The lemmings' route home is blocked by a chasm, so it's time for someone to build a bridge!

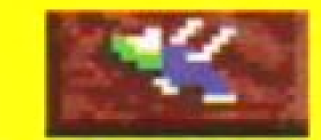
If you like games that are a little bit different, you'll love this. You control a crowd of lemmings with the mouse (for the two player game you'll need two mice) and you have to get the cute little fellas to their home.

The trouble is that lemmings are notoriously accident-prone and will march to their deaths unless prevented. You have to choose particular lemmings and make them do different jobs, to save their mates along the route home.

There is a row of icons along the bottom of the screen. The two leftmost are for decreasing or increasing the rate of lemmings appearing in the game. The others are for instructing lemmings in the various skills available. Clicking on one and then clicking on a lemming will tell the lemming to do that job. Unfortunately, above each icon is a counter of the number of times you can do this – when it runs out, no more lemmings can be selected to do that particular job.

The playing area can be scrolled left or right by moving the cursor to the relevant screen edge: pressing the right mouse button will speed up the scrolling. Alternatively, click on the map at the bottom right of the screen.

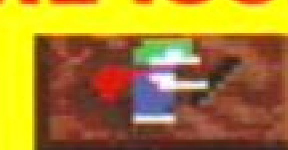
THE ICONS



Climber (will not climb overhanging obstacles)



Blocker (stops any lemmings walking past)



Builder (builds bridges across tricky gaps)



Miner (digs down diagonally into the ground)



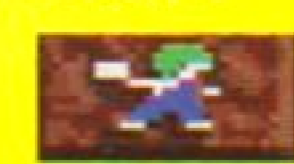
Nuke (turns every lemming into a bomb)



Faller (equipped with a parachute)



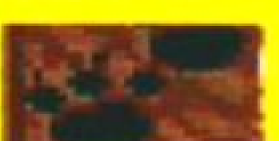
Bomber (with a five-second fuse)



Basher (knocks horizontal holes)



Digger (digs straight down)



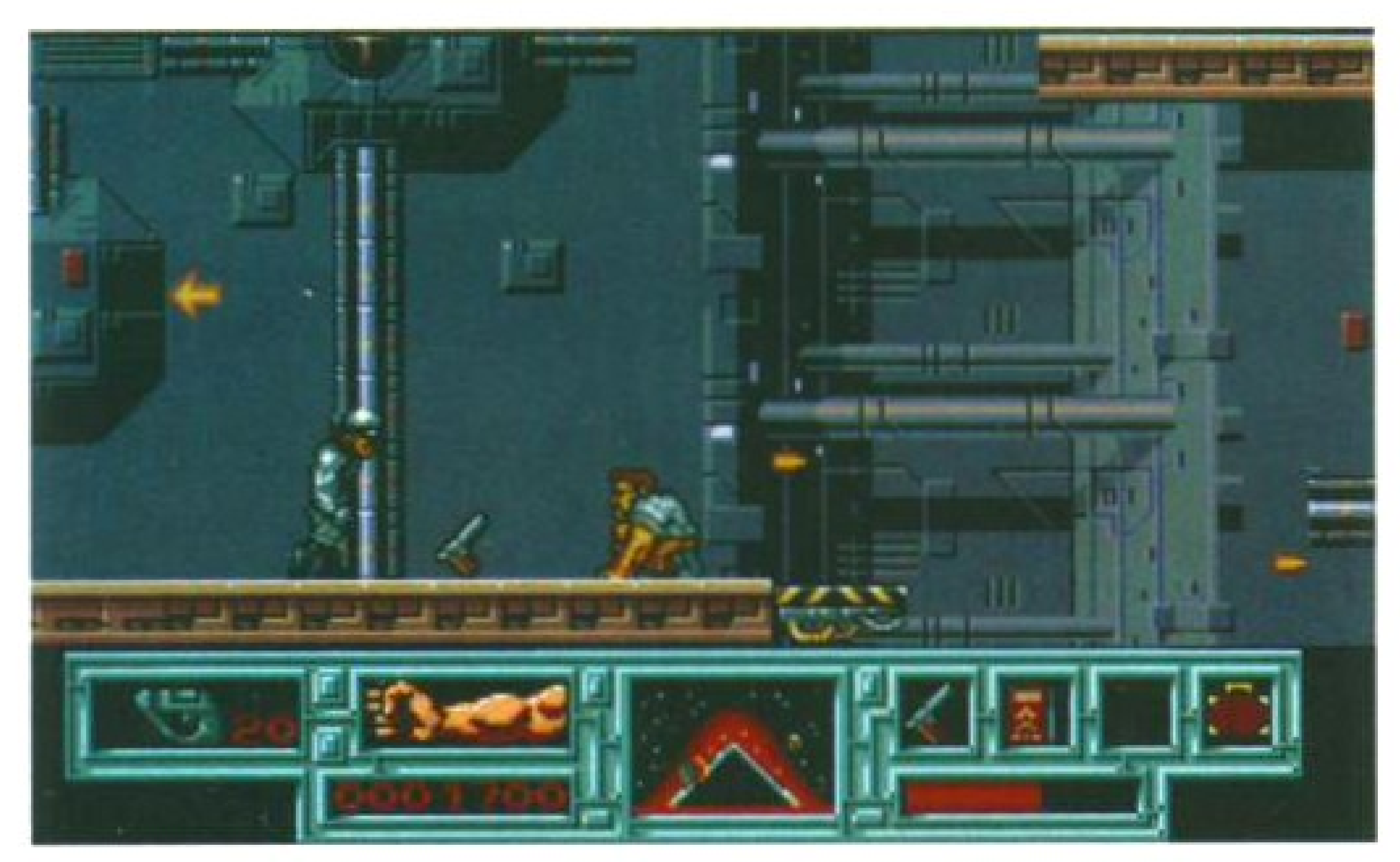
Pause (pauses the game)

TOTAL RECALL

OCEAN



Quaid (Armold Schwarzenegger) pretending he hasn't noticed two thugs creeping up on him. They're in for a shock!



Arnie crouches down in a mean and ugly way. He wants that gun.

Seen the film? Try the game! This is the first level from Ocean's big Christmas release. You play Quaid (Arnold Schwarzenegger), the hero whose role in life is to have nightmares and blow extras away. Said nightmares involve the planet Mars, which is strange because apparently he's never been there.

On this first level, you have to find four pieces of equipment which lie scattered about. An arrow points in the rough direction of the equipment, which is best collected in order.

The bad news is, you have only three minutes to collect all of the equipment. Lots of bad guys will try to stop you – your life force is displayed in a bar at the bottom right of the screen.

The game is played entirely with a joystick. Push left and right to move, diagonal left and right to jump, and up and down to move lifts when you're standing on them. You can crouch in the corridors by pushing down as well – and this also picks objects up if you're close enough to reach.

The first thing to collect is a gun, which is just to the right of where you start. It's only got ten rounds in it (the counter at bottom left indicates this) but more ammuntion can easily be found.

There are also mystery objects with question marks on them – these have random effects, ranging from helpful (extra ammo) to damned awkward (reversing all the controls).

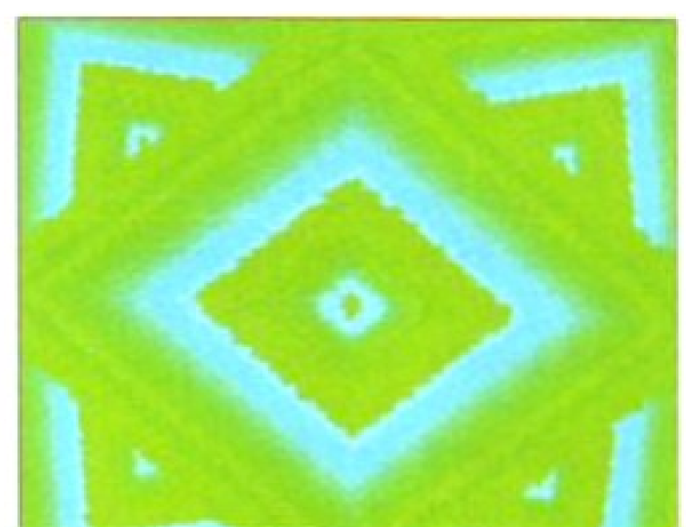
Total Recall – a little advice

The demo on this Coverdisk is only of the first level. When you reach the end of the level, the game normally proceeds, but the demo has not been created to go any further than this. You will get a glimpse of the next section, but the game will then crash. Don't panic! Simply reset your Amiga to play again or choose another item.

CYCLEDELIC

DAVID CUTHILL





It's a lightshow program – indeed, quite a hypnotic one – and combines with music very well. It has a soundtrack built into it, but if this doesn't agree with you, you can always turn the sound down on your monitor or TV and listen to your own choice of music.

You can control the swirling patterns on the screen by pressing certain keys. Details of these are in the documentation: to read this, boot up your Workbench disk, insert the Coverdisk, double-click on the Coverdisk icon, double-click on the music icon, double-click on the Cycledelic.doc icon. To get out of the program just click on the left mouse button. The files (all in Music directory): Cycledelic, Cycledelic.info, Cycledelic.doc, Cycledelic.doc.info, Davcom.

WARNING: THIS PROGRAM MAY INDUCE EPILETIC FITS IN THOSE PRONE TO EPILEPSY (and headaches in everyone else!)

MIDIEQUALISE

STEVE POYNTER

If you have a MIDI interface for your Amiga – have you ever wanted to 'see' the music you play like on one of those graphic equaliser things found on expensive hi-fis? You do? Well, what a coincidence, since that's exactly what this program is. Yep, that's right, it's a graphic equaliser for your MIDI-compatible synthesiser, or any other MIDI instrument.

MidiEqualise checks for MIDI notes (from any channel) and if any are detected, then the familiar graphic equalisers bars are produced on the screen, although with lots of colour! Each bar has a part of the synth keyboard designated to it (usually two notes per bar although there are more notes per bar at both ends of the keyboard), so different keypresses raise different bars on the screen. The bars are also velocity-sensitive, so for best results go out and buy a velocity-sensitive keyboard!

To run the program, simply plug in a MIDI lead from the MIDI OUT of the synth to the MIDI IN of the MIDI interface of the Amiga and then get on down and press those notes. To exit the program, simply press the left button.

Files used are: Midiequalise, Midiequalise.info, Midireadme.doc, Midireadme.doc.info

PIC OF THE MONTH

SIMON WILKINSON

This month Simon Wilkinson from Worthing wins the coveted title with this well-observed picture of Donald Duck and Count Duckula. Yes, two disks, two ducks! Click the left mouse button to return to the menu.



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BATMAN



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BIP

PETER MASON

Another complete game! This is an excellent little game for two players – so you'll need two joysticks to play it. The idea is to shoot down your opponent as many times as you can (shooting down balloons also counts). The first player to notch up 16 kills wins the game.

The controls are light and sensitive, so pay close attention. At the start of the game you can select manual or automatic acceleration by pushing the joystick in port two left or right. The game is a lot easier on automatic – otherwise you have to push the joystick up to gain speed.

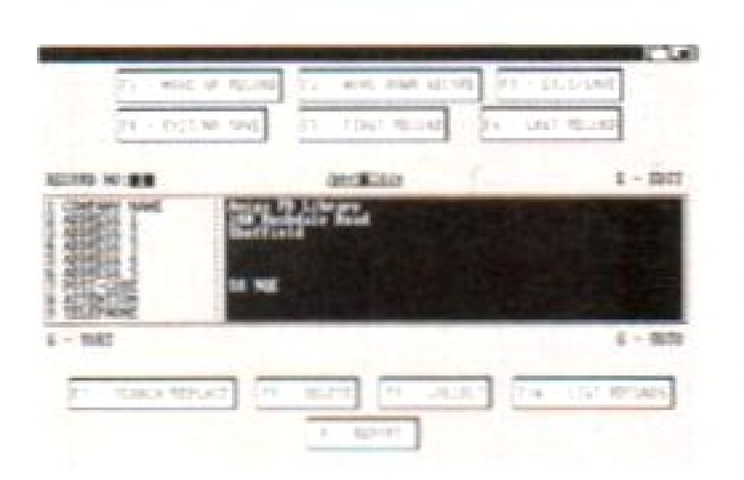
Pushing the joystick left or right will tilt your plane in the relevant direction, but beward of stalling (losing too much speed). Your plane will slow down and start heading for ground zero. The only way to get out of a stall is to push your nose directly towards the ground and pull out at the last instant – you need plenty of height to do this.

Finally, pressing the fire button will fire your gun.

Tactics: gain height quickly and use it to your advantage. If your opponent gets on your tail, don't panic but dodge into the nearest patch of cloud. And do practice your takeoffs: it's all too easy to plunge into the hut in the middle of the playing area. Tally ho!

ILINIOS

AUTHOR:PAUL NEWPORT



Ilinios is a powerful, user-friendly labelling system written and compiled with HiSoft Basic. It's been designed to rely on the mouse for controlling it, although each function can also be used by pressing a function key.

To try it out, select *Ilinios* from the menu on the Coverdisk and press F1 to import a file. Enter the name companies.add – this is a short example file in a directory called Files. It only has one label on it, but it'll give you the idea.

If you want to use *Ilinios* properly, it's a far better idea to copy it onto another disk with plenty of blank space on for your own files. Copying *Ilinios* is fairly easy – no messing about with the CLI.

If you want to read more about *Ilinios*, boot up Workbench, insert the Coverdisk, double-click on the Coverdisk icon and double-click again on the *Ilinios* icon. Then double-click on the Ilinios.doc icon to read the istructions.

To copy *Ilinios*, again boot up Workbench. After the drive light has gone out, put in the Coverdisk and click on it twice to open it up. Insert a blank, formatted disk. Double-click on the blank disk's icon, and then drag the *Ilinios* icon onto it. The copying process will take quite a long time with lots of disk swaps for single drive machines. With an extra drive, leave the Workbench disk in the internal drive and swap the others.

The files you might need to know about are: Ilinios, Ilinios.info, Ilinios.doc, Ilinios.doc.info, Files/companies.add and also Files/companies.add.info.

ELIZA

PHIL SOUTH

This is a program written and compiled with HiSoft Basic. When the original program was first tested on unsuspecting members of the public, some people took the responses the program generated as coming from a human being, rather than a machine. The program's purpose is more fully discussed in the Robotics feature by Phil South on Page 131, but all you need to know is that you have to type in sentences to the program, which will respond as best it can. Exiting the program doesn't work, I regret – when you get bored with it, reboot the Coverdisk. Files are: Eliza, Eliza.bas.

PROBLEMS LAST MONTH

Quite a number of readers had a problem with last month's disk – they booted it up, waited for a minute, and then sent it back to the duplicators for replacement because the Ultimate Ride demo didn't appear to load.

Well it does load – honest! It takes just over two and a quarter minutes to load – if you've got nothing by then, by all means send it back for replacement. I hope this sorts out the confusion.

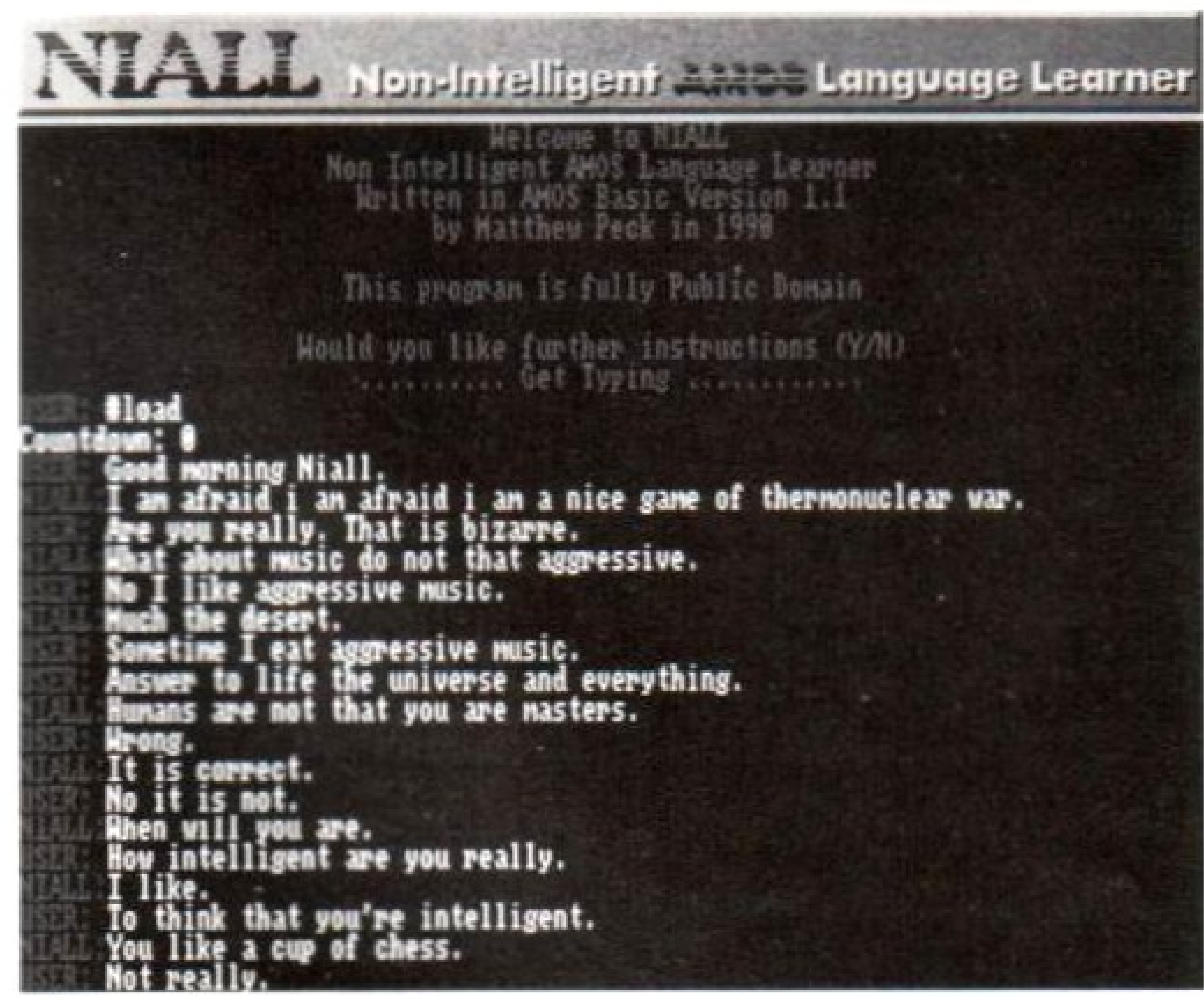
We know that a lot of our newer readers are new to the Amiga and not used to its occasional quirks – but do try to be patient. Always follow the instructions carefully and only return a disk if you are sure it's not working. Thanks for your help!



Instructions for the full game *Interphase* from Imageworks can be found on Page 173.

NIALL

MATTHEW PECK



Niall running on a one Meg machine.

Oh dear, you can't run this one straight from the disk – it needs to be installed on a Workbench disk for single-drive machines. Readers with two drives should boot up with Workbench, enter the CLI or Shell and type:

df1:ramos niall.amos

Instructions for installing *Niall* onto a Workbench disk are detailed fully on the Coverdisk, so I'll concentrate entirely on what the program does.

Niall (*Non-Intelligent-Amos-Language-Learner*) attempts to learn languages. It does this by building on what you input into it, breaking down the sentences and making its own up from the component pieces. For speed, it was written with AMOS and runs under the runtime system Ramos.

Rather than typing in your own dictionaries, you can load the example one included on the Coverdisk. To do this, from inside *Niall* you must type:

#LOAD example.niall

Niall makes a fascinating comparison with *Eliza*, because although *Niall* often comes up with gibberish, it actually learns from what you type. The best way to teach it is to only use the present tense and talk about one particular subject – indeed, it can make quite a conversationalist in limited areas. See the Robots piece for more.

One final note: *Niall* takes into account what memory configuration you have and adjusts itself accordingly. This means that Amigas with only half a Meg will display a simpler screen layout, but the capabilities are exactly the same for all machines. Files: Niall, ramos, example.niall, Amos_system (the last is a directory).



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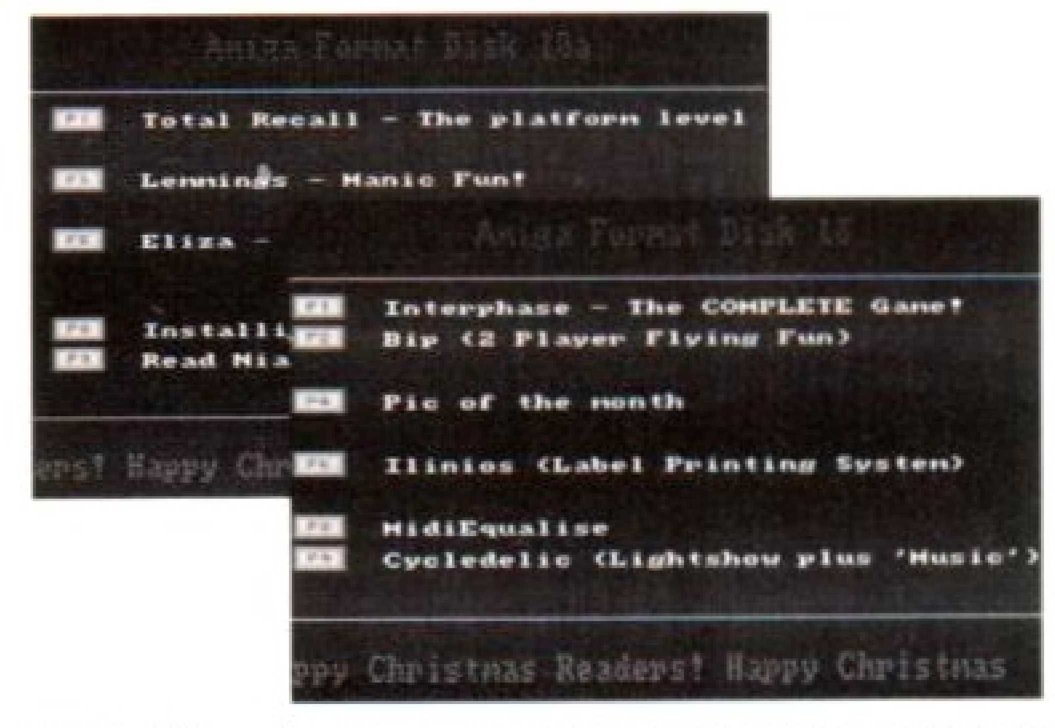
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Using Your Coverdisk

1. Always write-protect your disk. Move the tab so a hole is showing.
2. Back the Coverdisk up if possible. Instructions are given below.
3. Read the instructions when using the programs.

USING THE PROGRAMS

All programs on the *Amiga Format* disk are specially set up to make them as easy to use as possible. The majority of programs on these disks will run from a simple menu system – simply put the Coverdisk in the drive, wait for the menu to appear and then press the appropriate function key.



Full details on how to use any programs that will not run from this menu system are included in the Coverdisk pages on the preceding pages of this magazine.

BACKING UP YOUR DISK

It is important to make a backup of the Coverdisk as soon as possible: but note, because of the *Lemmings* demo you WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BACK UP THE MAIN COVERDISK.

Copying the disk may sound like a complicated task suitable for techno-buffs only, but it is surprisingly simple provided you read the following instructions carefully:

1. First, turn on your machine and load Workbench. Once the Workbench screen appears and the disk-drive light goes out, remove your Workbench disk and insert our Coverdisk.

2. Next, click once on the Coverdisk icon and then press the right mouse-button and the Workbench menus will appear. Now, while keeping the right mouse-button depressed, move the mouse pointer over to the 'Workbench' heading and a menu will drop down. Move the mouse pointer over the 'duplicate' menu option and then press the left mouse-button.

3. After a few seconds' disk access, the Workbench DiskCopy tool will be loaded and run. Now just follow the on-screen prompts and your *Amiga Format* Coverdisk will be copied to a backup disk. When the machine asks for the destination, insert your blank disk into the drive. Further instructions are in the user's guide that comes with your Amiga.

DISK PROBLEMS?

If you have a problem with the disk – and you're sure the disk is in full working order – then you may need a little help. We cannot normally give out advice over the telephone – but if you are completely stuck, Pat McDonald may be able to deal with any problems you may encounter. Please remember that iving this sort of advice is extremely time-consuming and we are very busy people, so only call if you really have to and do be considerate if we can't talk to you at that particular moment. It is generally better, if you have a problem, to send it to us in writing stating the model of your machine and anything you've got attached to (or plugged inside) the computer. It will then be dealt with in the Workbench pages of the magazine. Remember, if your disk is faulty send it to the address on this page, NOT to us. We haven't got ant stocks.

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DISK NOT WORKING?

We duplicate over 100,000 disks every month – and this issue, we've done twice as many! Out of all those, obviously a few will be faulty. If the disk or any of the programs will not load or run properly, there may be a problem. Don't panic!

First try using the DISK-DOCTOR utility on your Workbench disk to rescue it before sending it off for a replacement. Full details of *DiskDoctor* can be found in the user's manual that came with your machine.

However, if it transpires that either your Coverdisk or your Interphase disk is faulty, you should send it back for a free replacement within a month of the cover date to:

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BE CAREFUL!

We have done our best to check that the programs on the *Amiga Format* Coverdisk are simple to use, error-free and have no known viruses. However, we cannot answer telephone queries on using the software, and we do not accept liability for any consequences of using the programs on the disk.

Be particularly careful with virus-checking programs: the disks may give a 'non-standard bootblock' message, but this does not mean you should install a new bootblock. The disk might no longer work if you do.

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Unless specifically stated, the programs on the Coverdisk are not in the public domain and the copyright remains with the author. Selling or distributing these programs without the author's permission is against the laws of copyright.

WE WANT YOUR PROGRAM!

If you've got any programs for the Amiga which you think other readers would find useful, interesting or amusing, we'd very much like to know about them.

1. Make sure your program is simple and foolproof to use.
2. Create a file called README.DOC on the disk which explains exactly how to use your program.
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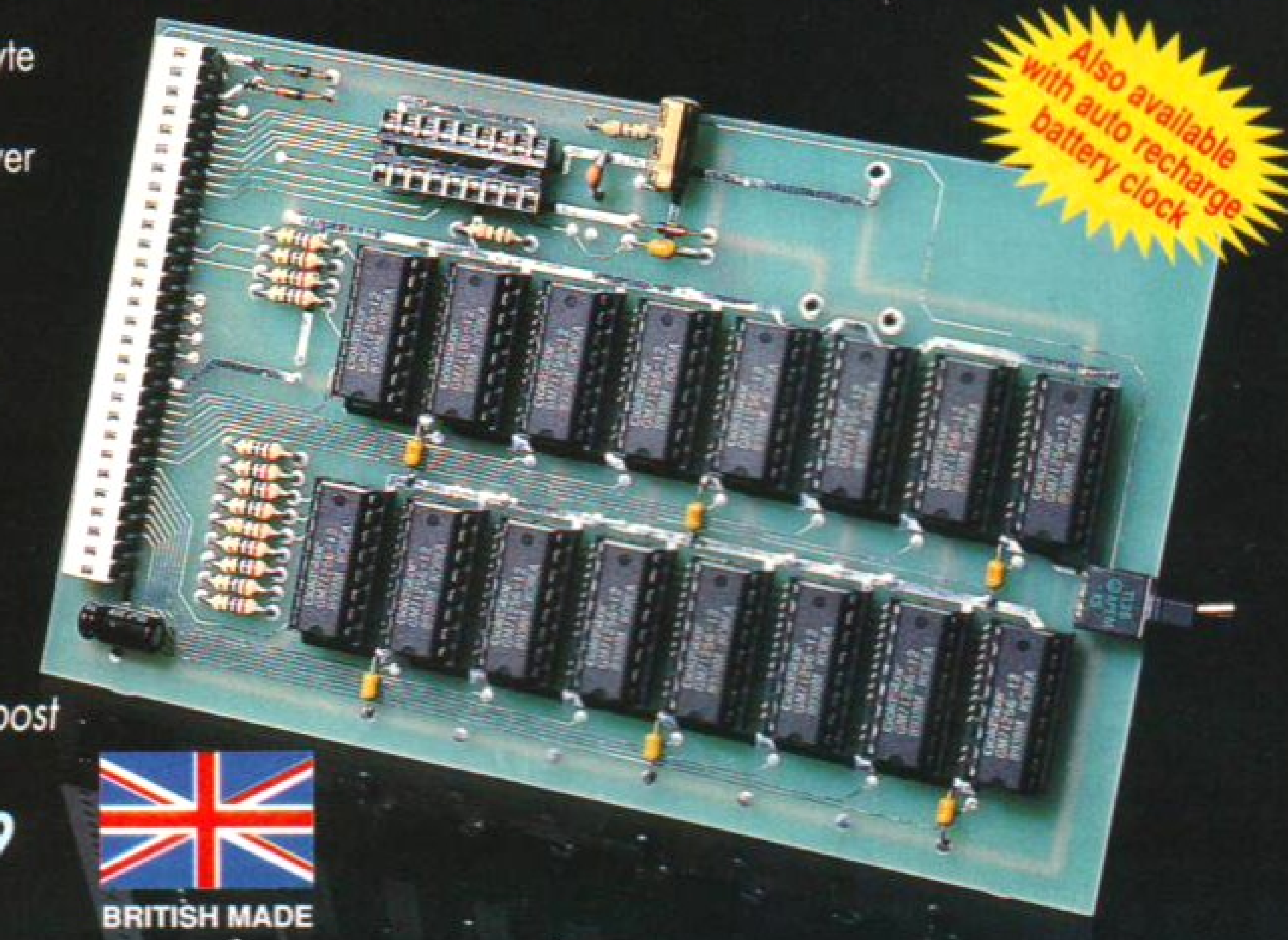


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Chad is a Dreamer, one of the lucky few whose minds can be tapped for DreamTracks and whose imaginations are fertile enough to produce good dreams. Dreamers are accorded the status of movie star idols and Chad is one of the best, so his career is set to rocket – until he discovers that his latest Track is laced with deadly subliminal images that can destroy the mind!

For the big companies that control society, profit is the only motive and life is cheap: so DreamTrack Corporation have no qualms about releasing the deadly Track. Horrified by the prospect, Chad sets out with his female partner, Kaf-E, to recover the Master Track from the DreamTrack Corporation's High Security building and destroy it...

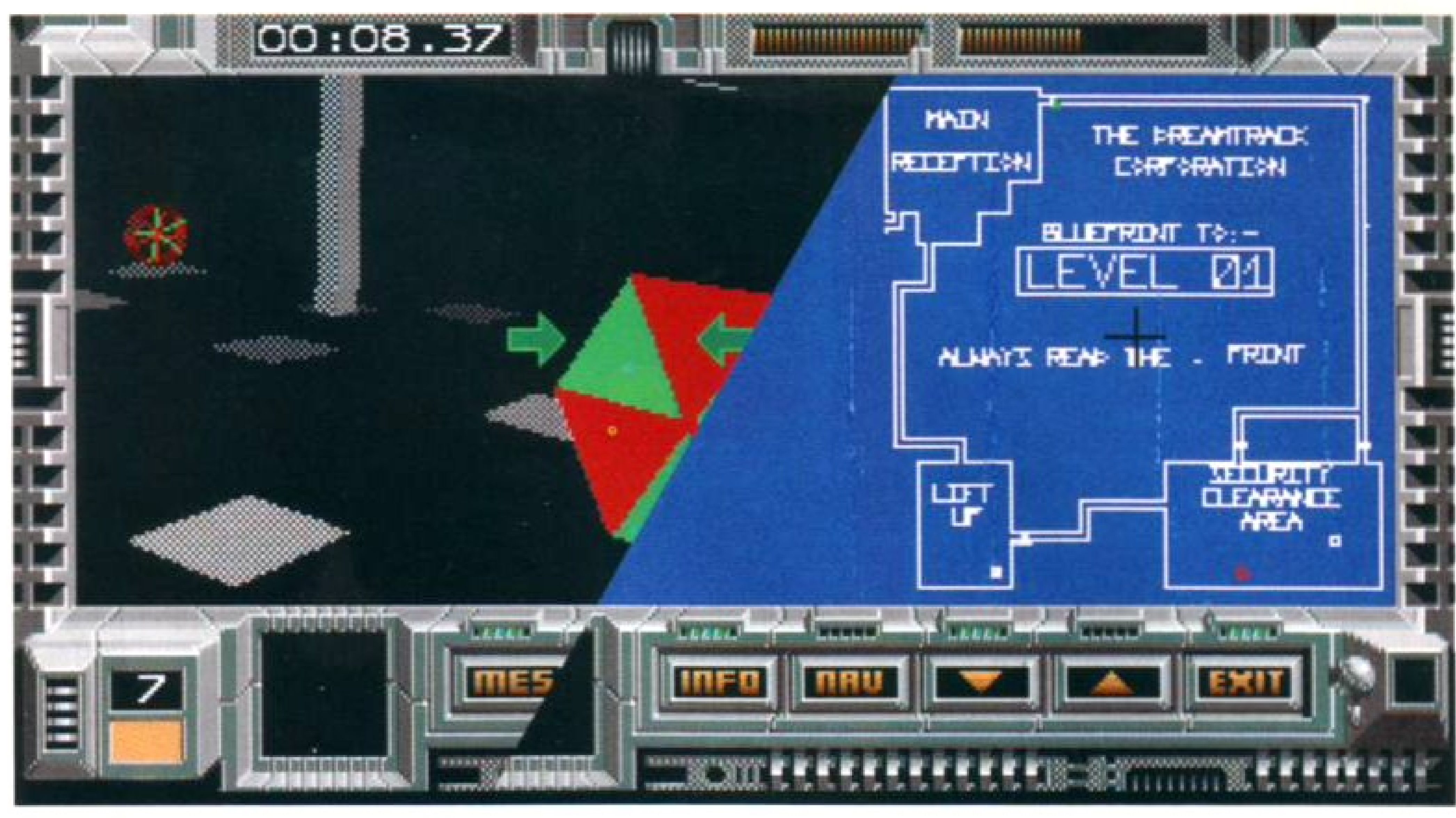
Where You Come In...

You play Chad as he hacks into the computer that controls the building's security systems, using an interface between man and machine – the Interphase – to travel inside the computer as if it was a real, three-dimensional world. Within the computer you must locate and destroy the circuits that control the building's security systems and guide Kaf-E safely to the top of the building.

Once at the top she must collect the DreamTrack from the vaults before making her way back down the building to the exit.

Chad's viewpoint is represented by an abstract 3D environment, which is where the action takes place. Kaf-E's plight, on the other hand, is shown on a two-dimensional blueprint of the building's floors. The Interphase also enables Chad to intercept any messages from Kaf-E.

The game is over either when Chad's energy runs out, thus severing the Interphase link and condemning Kaf-E to certain death, or when Kaf-E is killed by the security systems.



This is Interphase

The whole excellent Imageworks game worth £29.95! Extraordinary! All you need now is the instructions: so here is a simple, step-by-step guide, complete with a quick-start solution to the first level and a host of hot tips to help.

GETTING STARTED

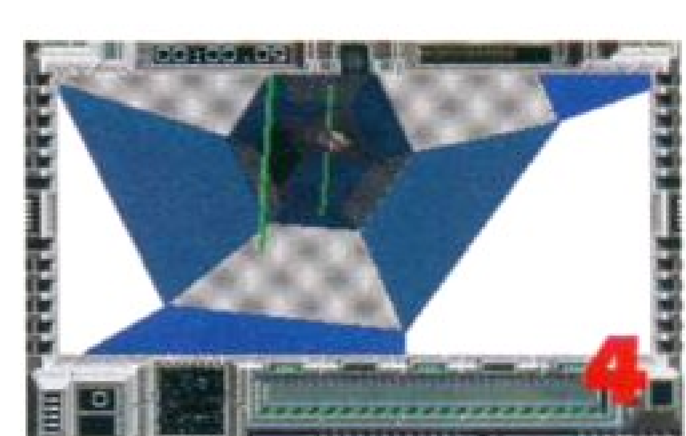
1 Insert your Interphase disk into the drive and turn on your Amiga. The menu for all the programs on the disk will load.

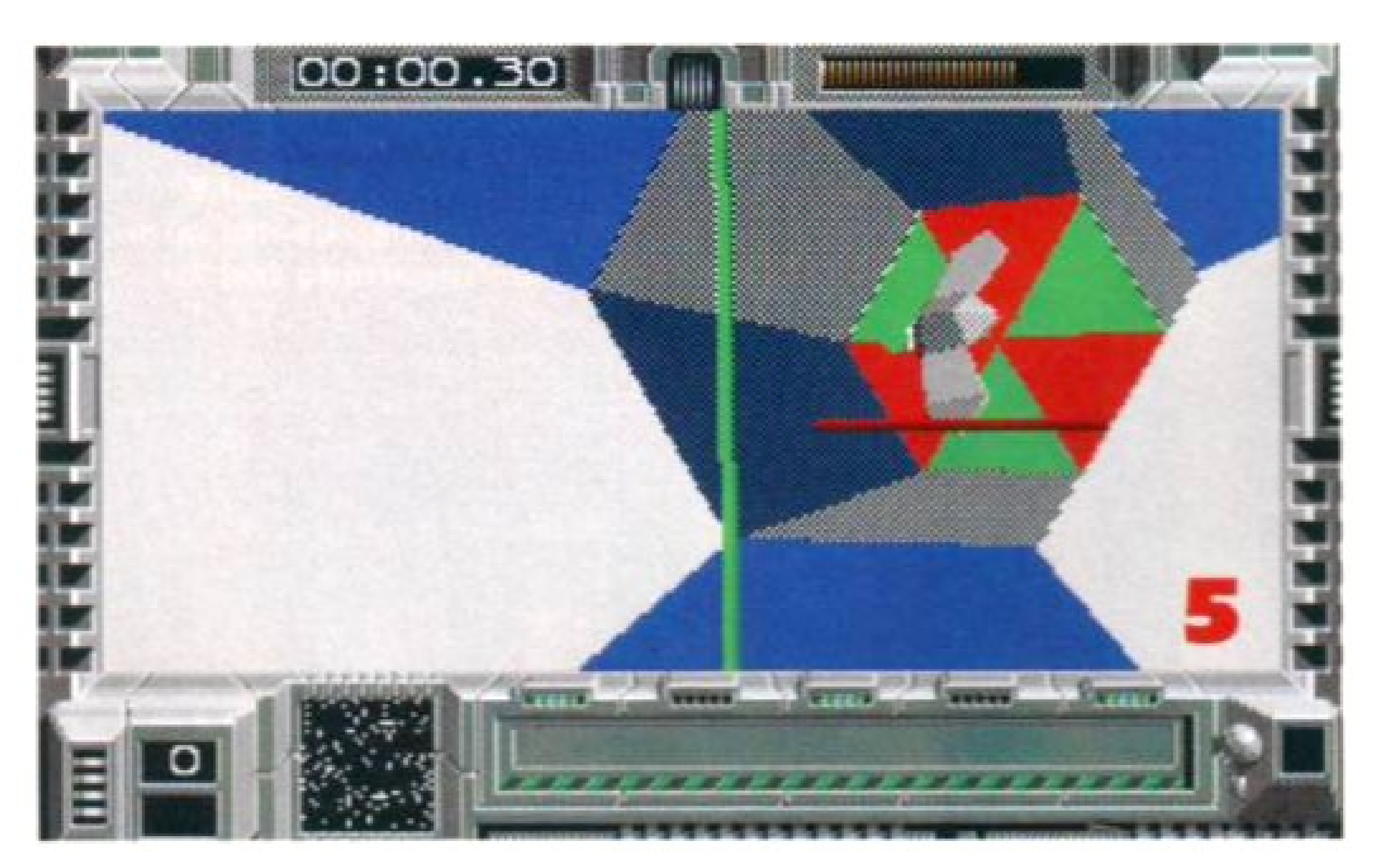
2 Press F1 to choose Interphase: be patient while it flips to a blue CLI screen and then the menu screen briefly reappears. The game will load and the credits will roll. To begin play, press the mouse button or any key other than [Shift].





2





3 There is a short animation sequence of a digitised figure. Press the left-hand mouse button if you want to skip on past the animation.

First Impressions

4 You find yourself moving steadily down the first tunnel towards the first level. Each level of the game represents a different floor of the building. The building's floors are all connected by these tunnels, through which Chad travels at a constant speed. Follow the Guide, avoiding the walls and the green or red Data Lines which horizontally and vertically cross the tunnel.

5 The entrance to the level is the iris at the end of the tunnel – fly into it.

CONTROLS

- Move the mouse left or right to bank and turn left or right.
- Push the mouse forwards to dive and pull it back to climb.

Inside the Comp

Now you're inside the computer, press P to pause and have a look at the rest of the instructions. The computer is full of abstract 3D shapes which represent objects in the real world of the building, where Kaf-E is. The key to the game is swapping between your current view, inside the computer, and the Blueprint map that shows the real building. To access the map and the other functions using the buttons at the bottom of the screen, you need to switch from steering mode to pointer mode.

POINTER MODE

To activate the arrow pointer, simply hold down the right-hand mouse button and press the left-hand button (unfortunately, this makes it impossible to fire at the same time as accelerating), or alternatively just bang the Space bar. Note that control of Chad's movements is lost once the pointer appears, so beware of leaving him vulnerable and don't switch to pointer mode while moving at great speed!

CONTROLS

- Move up, down, left and right using the mouse as before.
- Hold down the right mouse button and push the mouse forwards to speed up.
- Hold down the right mouse button and pull the mouse backwards to slow down (or, indeed, to move backwards).
- Press the left mouse button to fire the cannon (your basic gun).
- To pause, press P. To continue, press any key except Shift.
- To turn very quickly to a different view, press:

8	VIEW FORWARDS
6	VIEW RIGHT
2	VIEW REAR
4	VIEW LEFT

GAME SAVE/LOAD

You don't have to start every game from scratch. Save your progress by pressing the Space Bar to get to the Game Load/Save Screen, then select the SAVE icon followed by OK.

You can only load or save a game in the tunnel section – in other words before or after a level is completed.

Do NOT use the *Interphase* program disk for saving games: format a disk beforehand.

Only one saved game can be stored on a disk, so use a different disk for each game. The saved game file is not shown on the disk's directory.

Save when you enter a tunnel and again at the end if you make it through successfully.

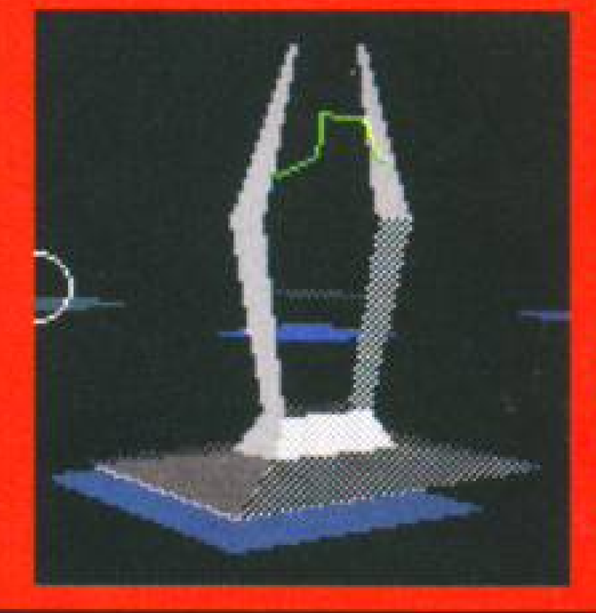
QUITTING A GAME

To chicken out, press SHIFT and ESCAPE together.



TIME INDICATOR

The time indicator is simply a Clock that shows game time elapsed.



ENERGY LEVEL

Your energy level reduces when you collide with the floor, objects, the enemy or its firepower. Energy is replenished by either entering a Power System or, better still, by flying under red arches.

To continually gain energy, try this: once you successfully fly under an arch, do not change your course at all. The layers wrap around – in other words, the level is repeated infinitely in all directions – so if you carry straight on you soon fly under the arch again.

LEVEL INDICATOR

Each of the building's 12 floors is split into eight layers – this number lets you know which layer you are on. To move from one layer to another, fly through the Communication Holes (coloured squares or gaps) marked on the floor or ceiling.

Some levels have no Communication Holes on the ceiling. Should you pass through the floor of such a level and wish to return, keep flying down through the Holes in the floor, until you reach the required layer again.



A security droid generator.

DEFENCES RADAR

In recognition of your arrival into its domain, the computer's Defence System is activated. Airborne and ground-based Generators produce Security Droids, most of which attack Chad. This radar shows the position of the computer's defence ships and the generators which create them. Use your cannons on the Droids, or better still, take out the Generators with your missiles before their offspring get you.



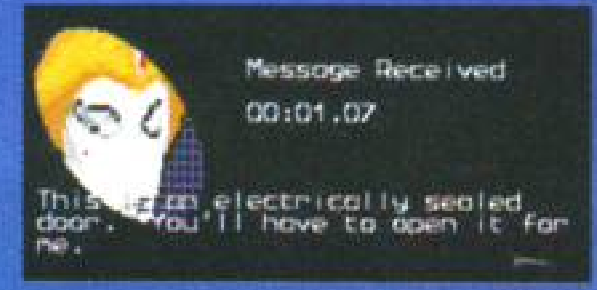
A security droid in flight.

MESSAGE WARNING

This panel flashes while an alarm tone sounds to show that Kaf-E is trying to tell you something. Either just press A to acknowledge and check it later, or go to the message screen.

MESSAGE SCREEN

Also activated by pressing M on the keyboard. Click on this button with the pointer to look at the messages from Kaf-E. Each one is timed so you know when it arrived. Press the right-hand mouse button to see the whole message – Kaf-E often provides useful information regarding the 3D environment. Use the Fast Forward and Rewind icons to check through other messages than the current one. Click the Down arrow to return to the main display.



TRACTOR BEAM (TRK)

Also activated by pressing T on the keyboard. The tractor device enables you to pick up objects and move them elsewhere. Select this icon, then press the left-hand mouse button when the cursor is over the target to capture it.

DOCKING DEVICE (DCK)

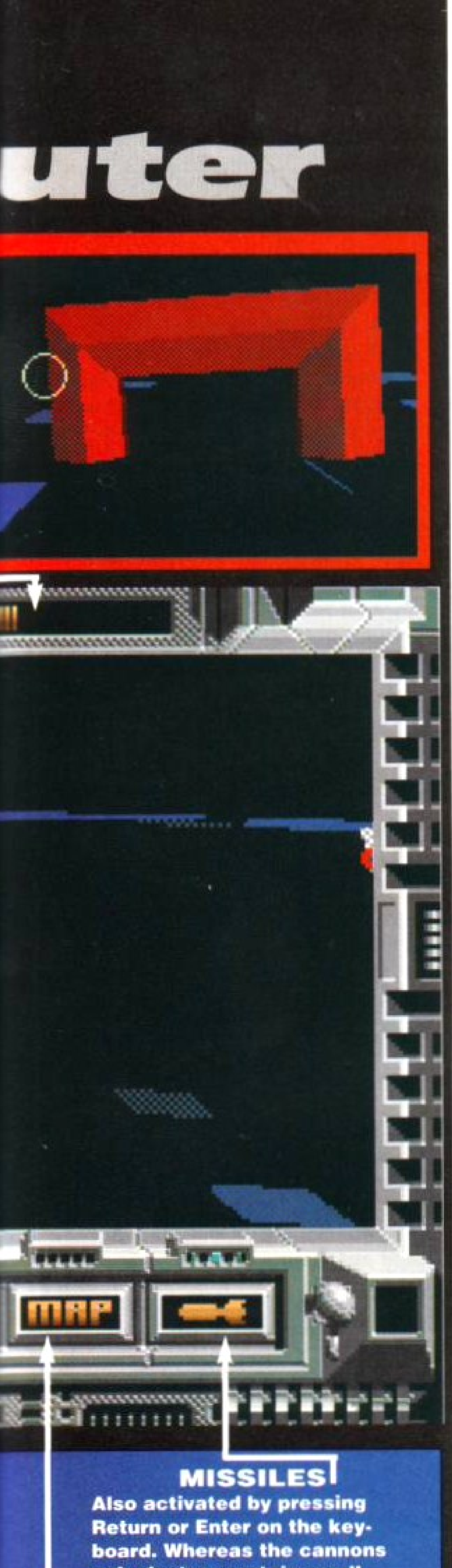
Also activated by pressing D on the keyboard. This enables you to enter certain objects and influence them from within – you can, for example, affect the orientation of turntables. Useful for docking with Power Systems to gain energy.

MAP

Also activated by pressing B on the keyboard. The blueprint for each of the 12 floors is shown only when a floor is reached – so you can't find out what's in store on later levels until you get there.

Always access and assess each blueprint, making careful note of the security systems present, and determine a safe route to the lift for Kaf-E to follow before attempting to disable any security "obstacles" in the 3D environment. Always zoom in to read the small print!

uter



MISSILES

Also activated by pressing Return or Enter on the keyboard. Whereas the cannons only destroy certain small objects, the missiles destroy everything. Select this icon, then press the left-hand mouse button when the cursor is over the target. When the locked message appears, press the left-hand mouse button again to launch a missile, then watch it home in on its target.

Use missiles to destroy objects wherever possible. The cannon is inaccurate: it fires two energy bolts, one of which destroys the intended item, but the other bolt flies off into the distance and may destroy other objects.



THE BLUEPRINT MAP

This is where the strategic side of the game takes place. The blueprint shows the layout of all the corridors, rooms, doors and other security devices present on the current level.

Look over the whole blueprint very closely – important clues are often well hidden!

Controls

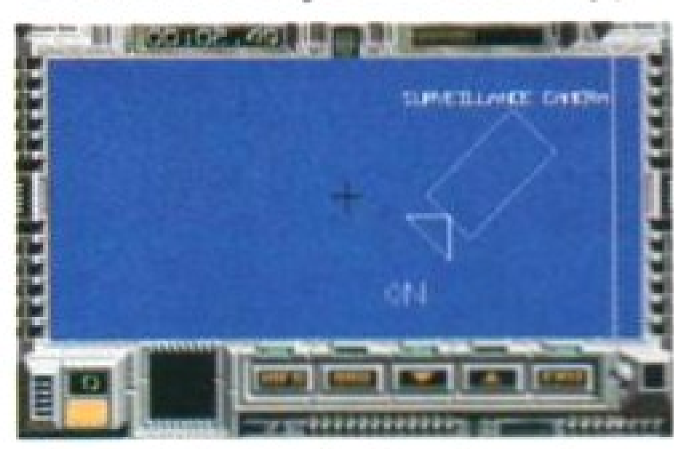
• To scroll the map, hold down the left-hand mouse button and move the mouse.
• Pressing the left-hand mouse button centralises the map on the crosshair.
• Pressing the right-hand mouse button centres on Kaf-E.

THE BUTTONS

Up arrow: Zoom Out
Down Arrow: Zoom In
Exit: To get back to main screen

INFO

Click on an object on the map,



then click this button to get more information about it. It will show you what the object looks like in the 3D computer world.



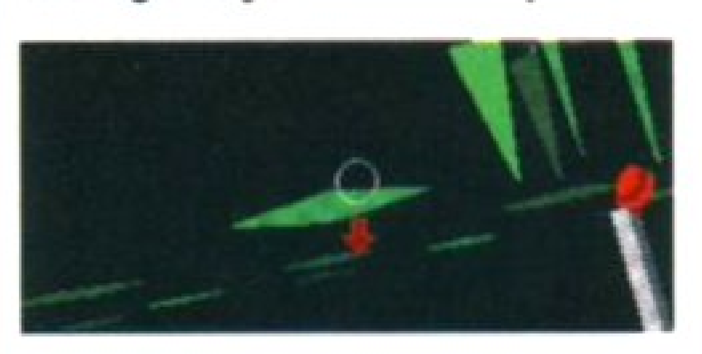
Press the right-hand mouse button to print the complete details. Press the left-hand mouse button at any time to return to the blueprint.

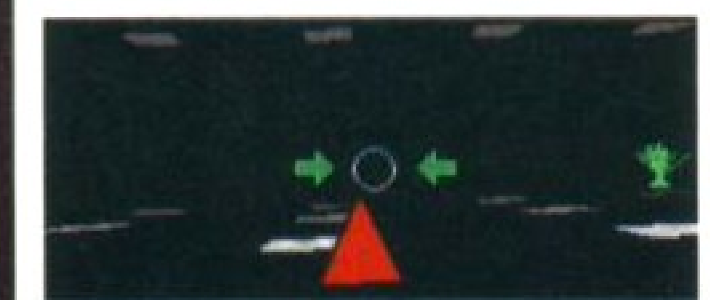
NAV

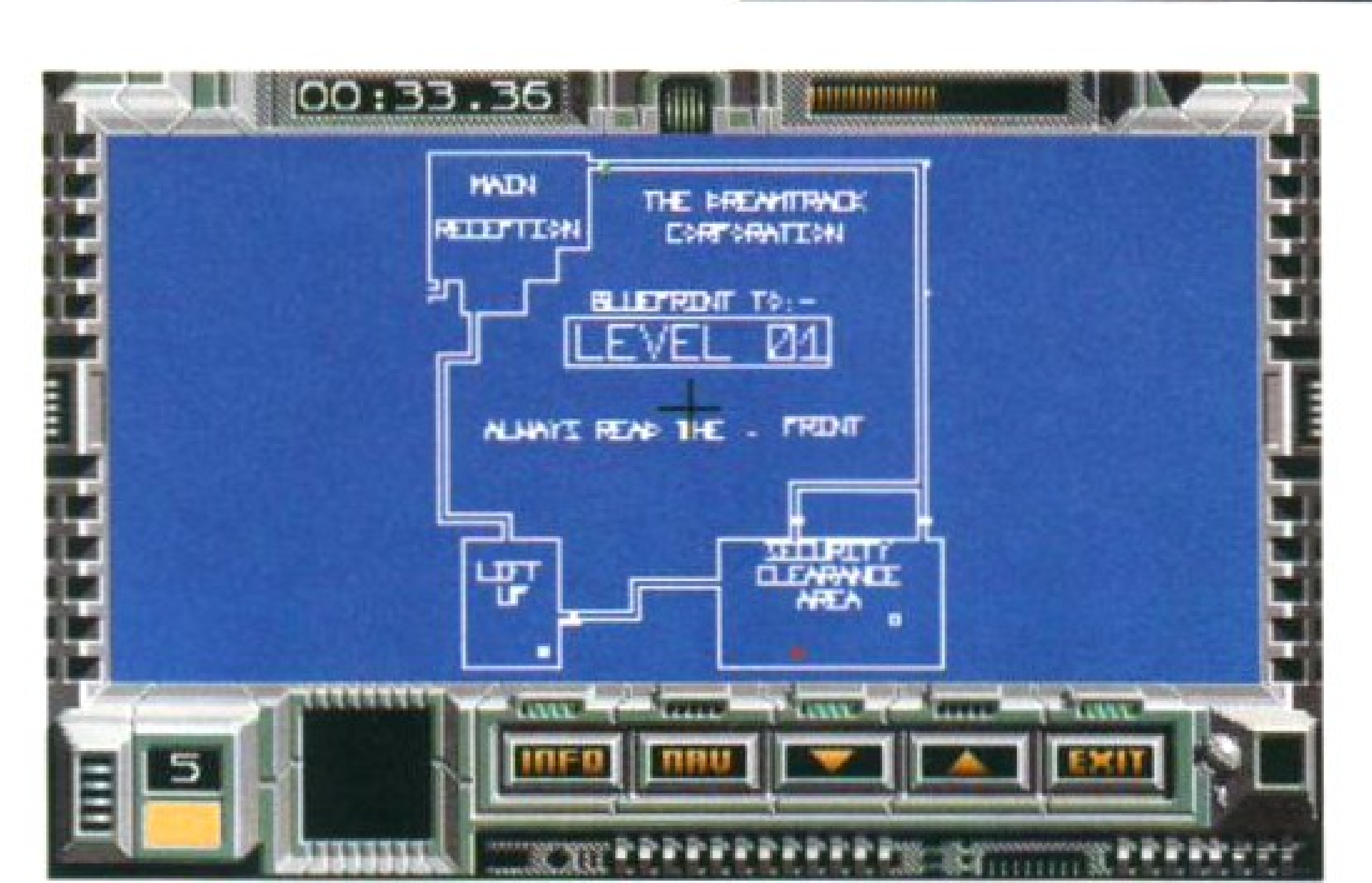
When you find the feature on the map you want to detroy, click on this and the NavCom (Navigational Computer) will lock on to it.



Exit to the main screen and arrows will guide you to the object – the arrows turn from red to green when you are on the right layer of the computer.







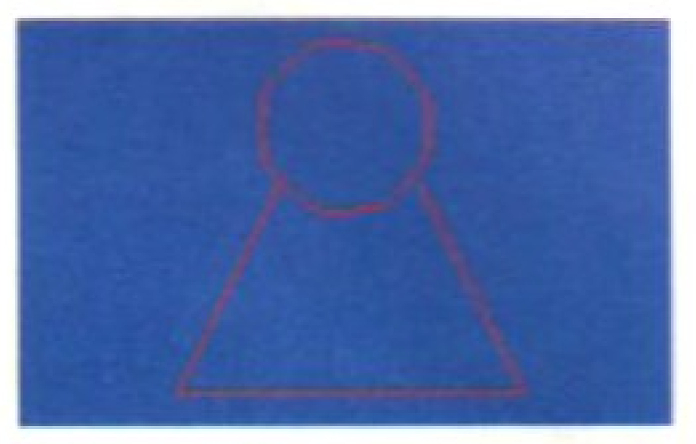
BLUEPRINT ICONS TO WATCH...

KAF-E



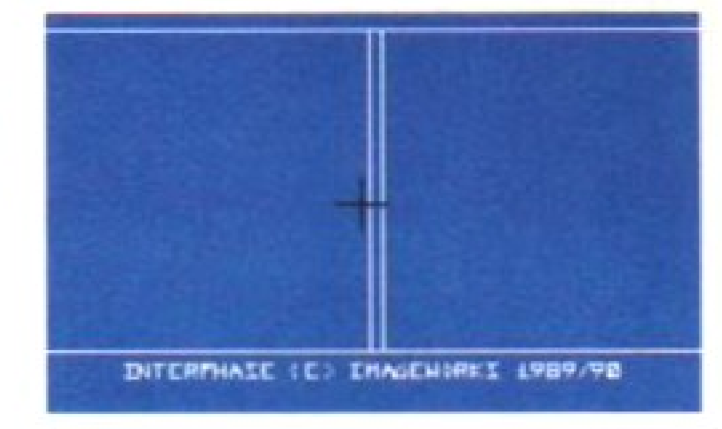
Protect her at all times

SECURITY DROID



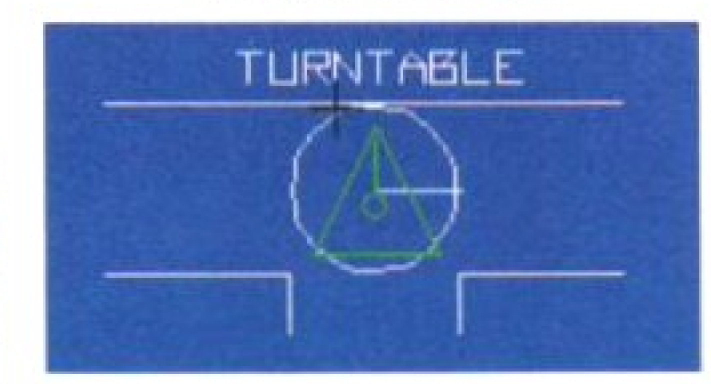
Set in motion by Pressure Pads and Cameras.

DOOR



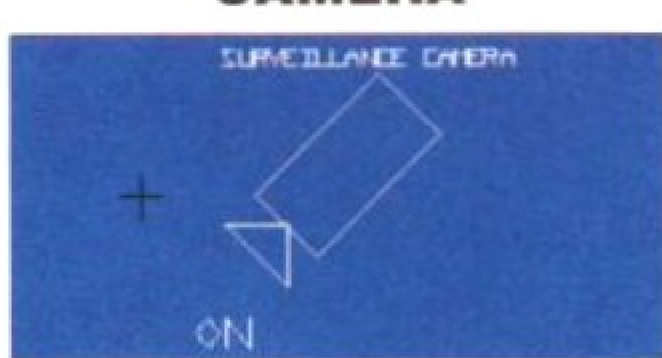
Closed doors stop Kaf-E but not the Security Droids.

TURNTABLE



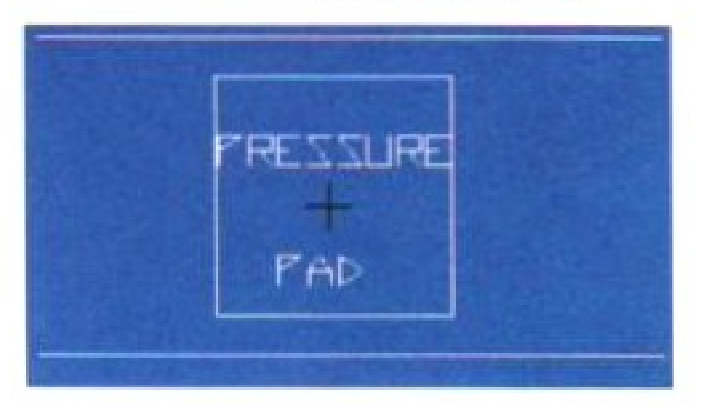
This directs the Droid in the direction it faces, but causes Kaf-E to stop. Dock with a Turntable and use the left-hand mouse button to rotate it. The right-hand mouse button exits. To make Kaf-E continue in the same direction, enter the Turntable and exit again without affecting its orientation.

CAMERA



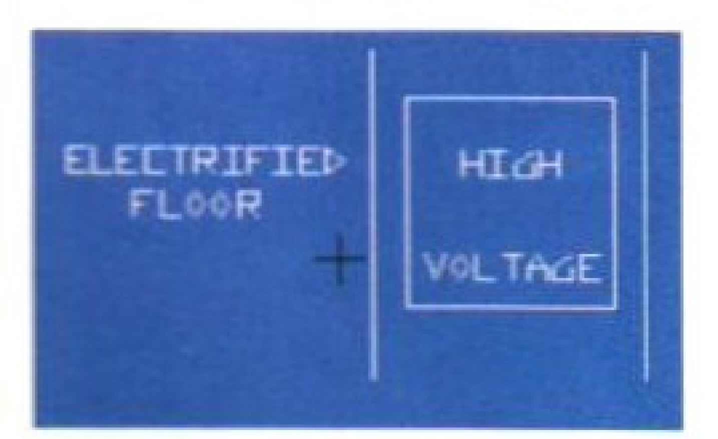
Some cameras activate Security Droids. Destroy the cameras to turn them off.

PRESSURE PAD



Some Pressure Pads activate Security Droids.

ELECTRIFIED FLOOR



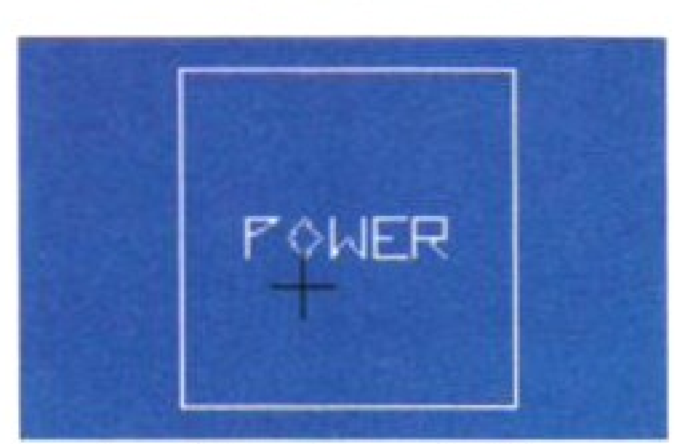
Touch an electrified floor and you're dead, but the floor becomes deactivated too: some consolation that is! Try directing a Droid into such a floor.

WORKSHOP SYSTEM



Enter a Workshop to clone any components accidentally destroyed. Use the right-hand mouse button to select the required component and eject it into the 3D world. Now exit and use the Tractor Beam to move the object to the required position. When you're replacing a component into its wireframe original, position it as accurately as possible before deactivating the Tractor Beam.

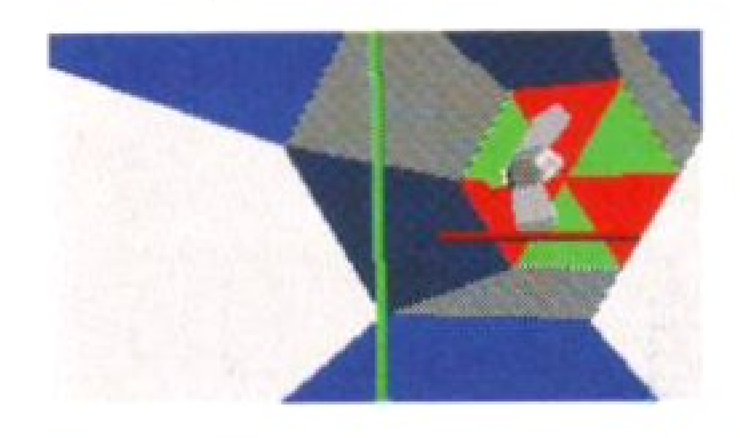
POWER SYSTEM



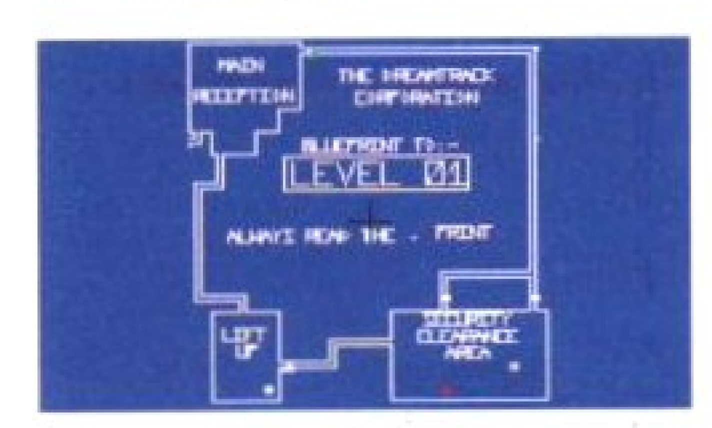
Dock with this to replenish your energy. Power Systems are destroyed after use.

Quick Start

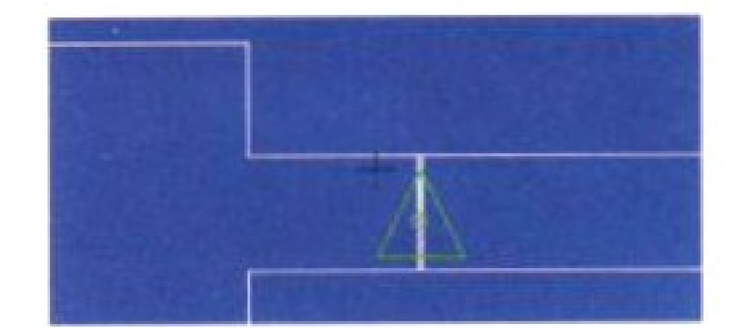
How to complete Level One of Interphase without really trying...!



1 Fly down the Tunnel to enter the computer.



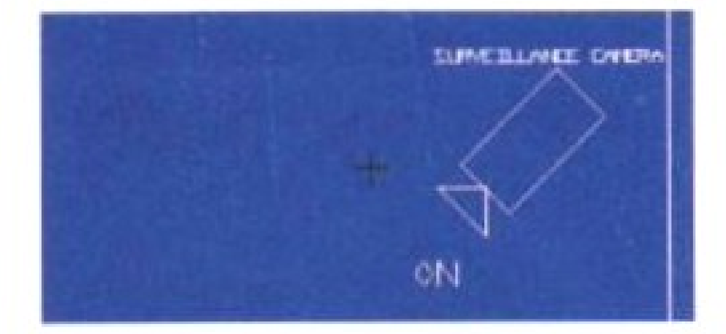
2 Hold down the right-hand mouse button, then press the left-hand mouse button – or press the Space bar – to activate the pointer. Click on MAP to see the blueprint for Level One.



3 Press the right-hand mouse button to centre on Kaf-E's icon. Zoom in to see more detail. Watch Kaf-E walk to the closed door in the reception area. She sends a message, causing the light to flash and a tone to sound.

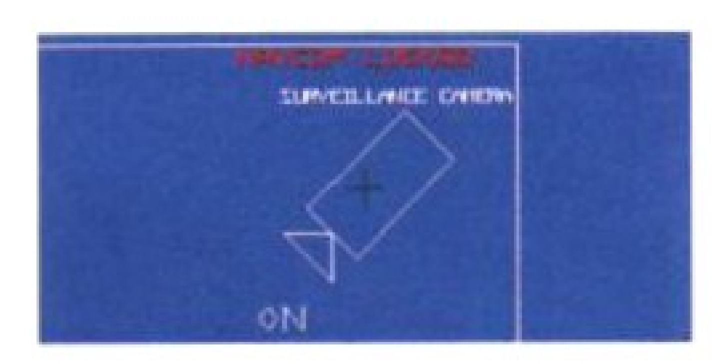


4 Click on EXIT then on MES to view Kaf-E's message.

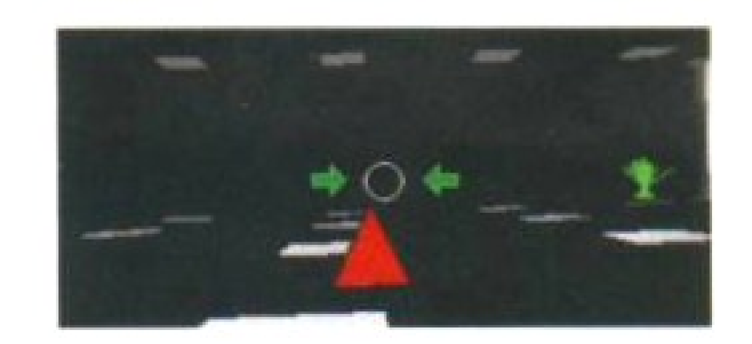




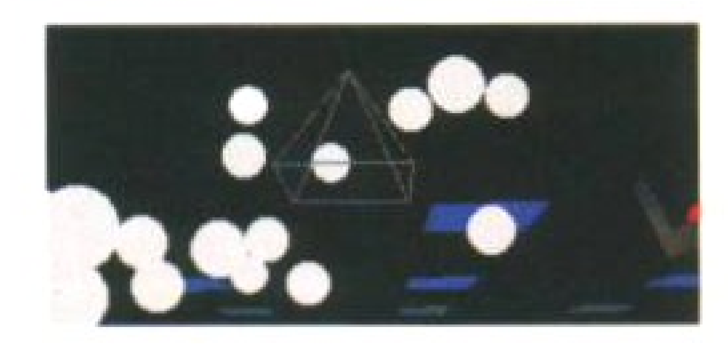
5 Click on MAP to return to the blueprint. Zoom in to the top right-hand corner. Note the camera is switched ON. Click on INFO to view the information on it. Exit to the blueprint.



6 Click on NAV to receive the NAVCOM LOCKED message.

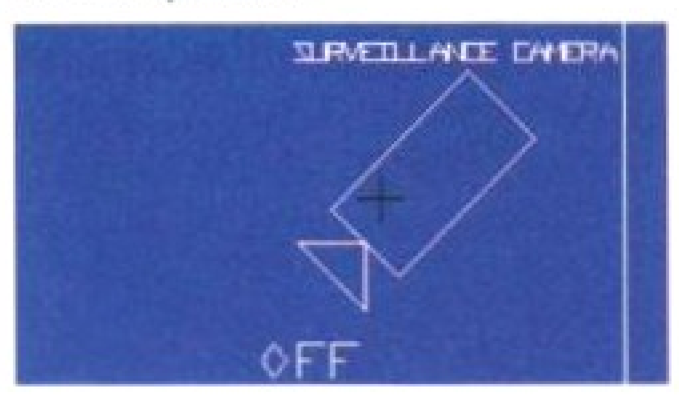


7 Exit to the 3D world. Arrows on the play screen direct you to the component representing the camera, the red pyramid.

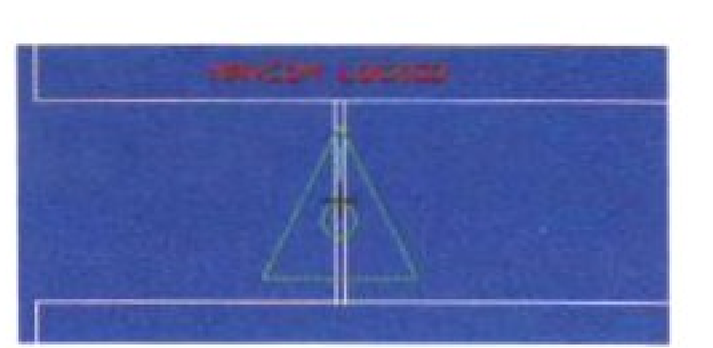


8 Use a missile to destroy the shape when you find it. Select a missile and press the left-hand mouse button when the cursor is over the target. Then when LOCKED confirmation is given, press the left-hand mouse button again to launch the missile.

Now just sit back and watch the missile home in and destroy the component.



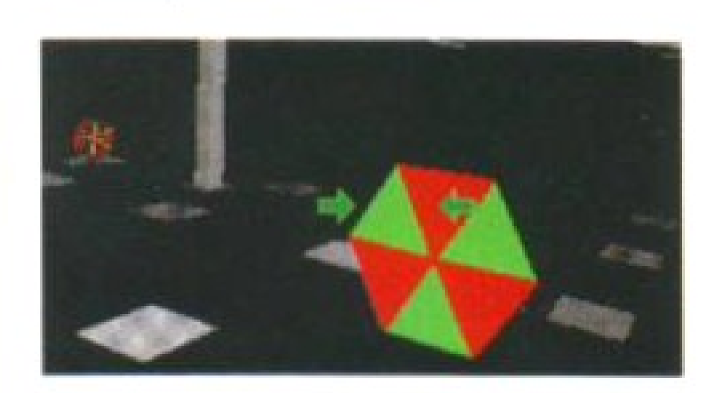
9 Return to the blueprint. The camera should now be OFF. Now your next problem is to deal with the door that is blocking Kaf-E's progress...



10 Move the cross-hair to the locked door in front of Kaf-E. Click on NAV, and when the NAVCOM LOCKED message is given, click on EXIT and seek out and destroy the door to open it.



11 Kaf-E now walks down the corridor, past the deactivated camera and past an activated camera. This second camera sets a Security Droid in motion, but don't despair – Kaf-E misses it at the junction before the Security Clearance Area.



12 Destroy the door to enable Kaf-E to enter the Security Clearance Area, then destroy the door to the Lift Room. When Kaf-E reaches the lift, select NAV and seek out the iris to the next level.

THE POINTLESS CHEAT!

If you type in Fenny (remember to use Shift for the capital F) you will find an object editor that allows you to examine all the 3D objects used in the game.

Use the left mouse button to move to the next object and the mouse to rotate them around. Holding the right mouse button, push forwards to zoom in and backwards to zoom out. To quit back to the game, press both mouse buttons together.

Interphase – The Easy Way!

Having problems? Here's a selection of tips and advice to help you complete this excellent and absorbing game.

1 Always clear the level you are working on of fighters and alien generators before tackling the puzzles.

2 When placing tractored objects into their wireframes, check the alignment from two sides to get the 3D positioning.

3 If you spot a red arch, remember its level number for future reference.

4 Always attempt to get all your energy back before finishing a level and entering a tunnel to the next one.

5 On the blueprint, you may have to deliberately set off robots in order to clear them from an area the girl will cross later on.

6 When attempting to destroy fighters which home in on you, either fly fast and shoot them using REAR VIEW, or fly backwards very fast.

7 When playing a level for the first time, make a note of which items trigger which robots and build up a picture of how the level is constructed. There are no random elements in the robot control aspect of the program.

Remember to take a good look at the blueprint at the start.

8 If you have to cross an electrified floor, use a nearby robot to deactivate it first.

9 Use the TURNTABLES to redirect problem robots to other areas of the building which will benefit you.

10 Don't be afraid to get the girl to back-track: this is essential for some puzzles.

11 Some cameras and pressure pads are red herrings. Learn the ones that are relevant to the route you need.

12 Set up areas of the blueprint before you need to. This will save time flying from one component to another when time becomes short.

13 Many levels are simpler than they appear. Try the obvious first.

14 Beware of loose robots doubling back if you wait too long.

15 Map out the level if it appears complicated and mark the relationships between objects that you may need.

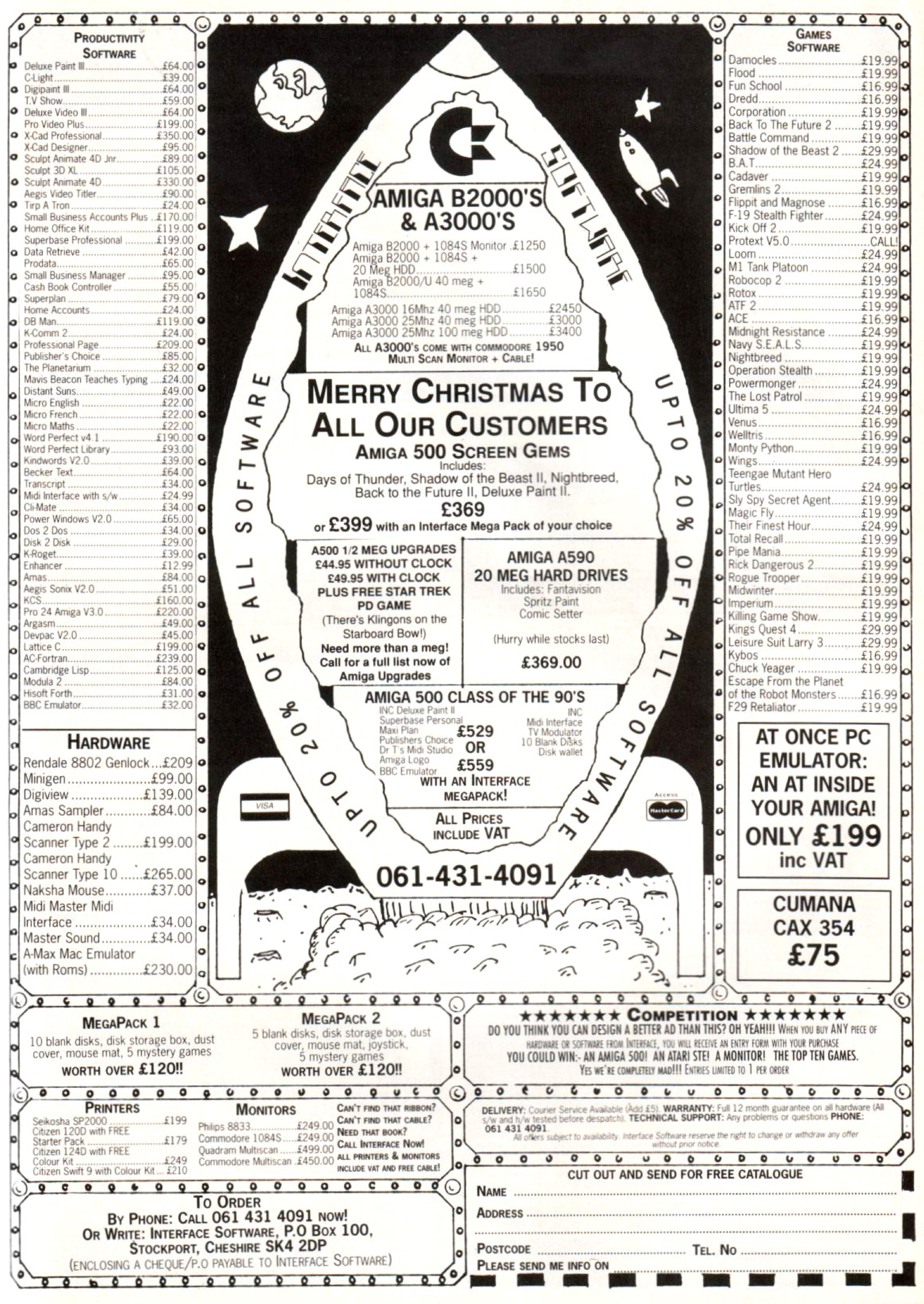
16 When you are experienced, don't waste time reading Kaf-E's messages: they're mostly the same for each item.

17 On the top floor, neutralise all risks (robots in the building and fighters in the 3D world) before examining various vaults.

18 Some of the fighters on later levels are very intelligent: learn their peculiar strategies and develop methods to counteract them.

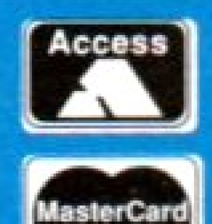
For example, the blue flying ray knows which component you are interested in be checking its NAVCOM status. Either destroy it (carefully) with a missile, or when you have found the component you need, NAVCOM onto something else to distract it.

19 The 'bird fighter' always circles ahead of you and can outrun your missiles. If it proves to be a problem, LOCK and FIRE a missile at it, then 'catch' it and hold it in position with a tractor beam, thereby allowing the missile to catch it up and destroy it.


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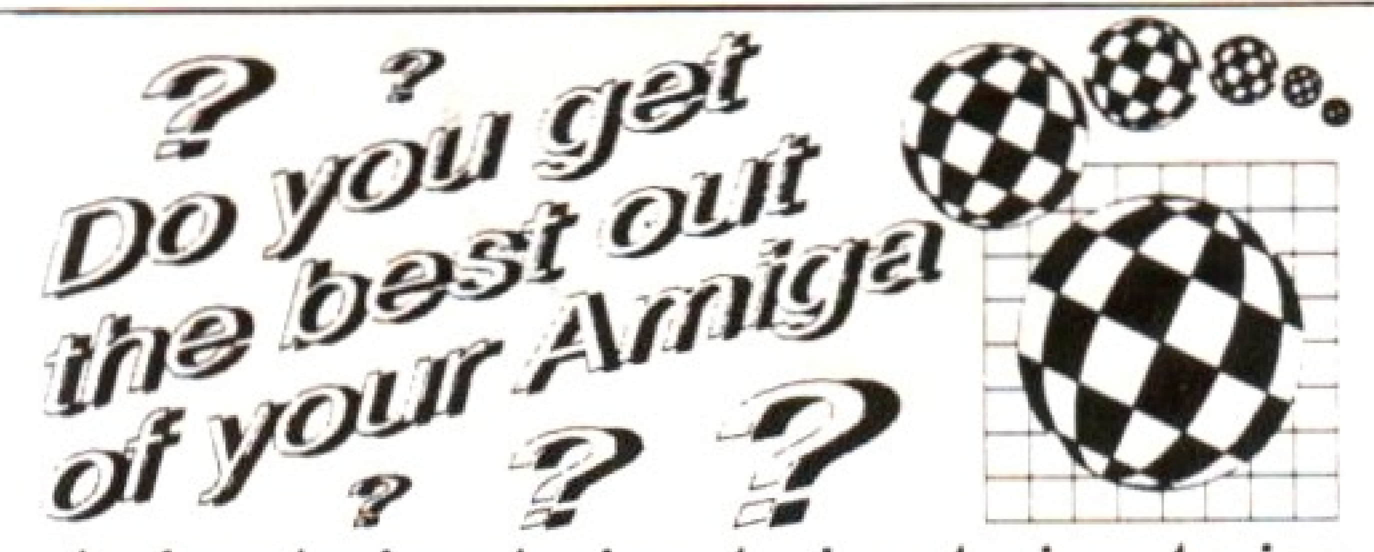
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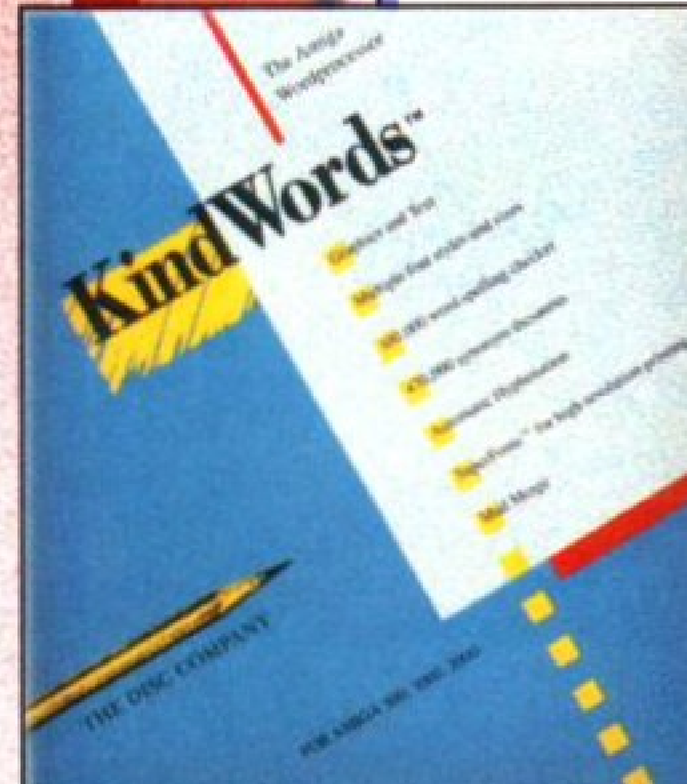


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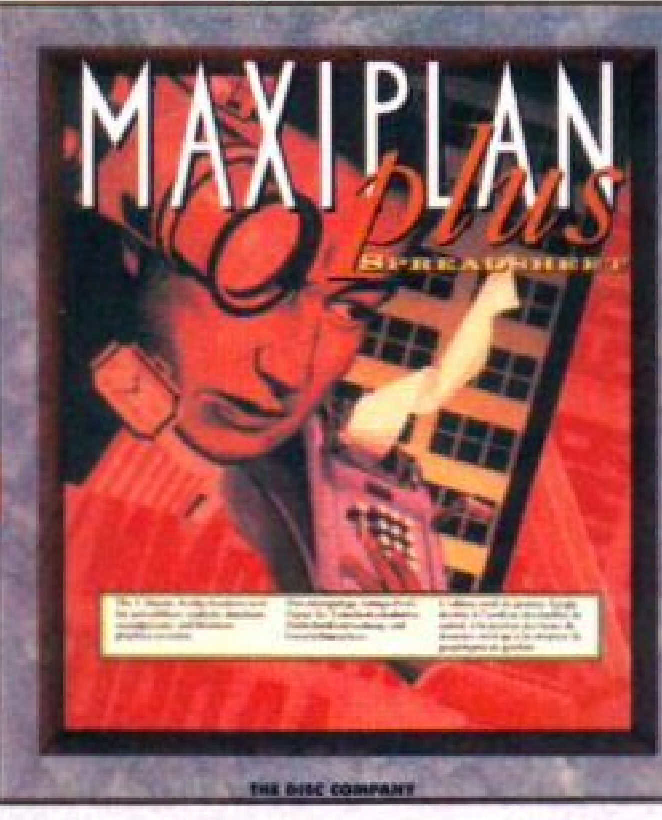
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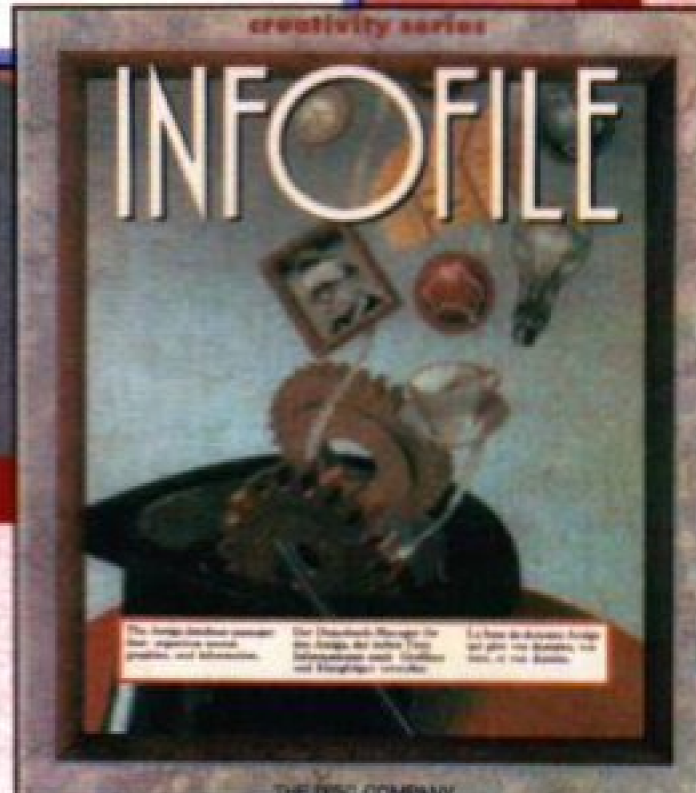
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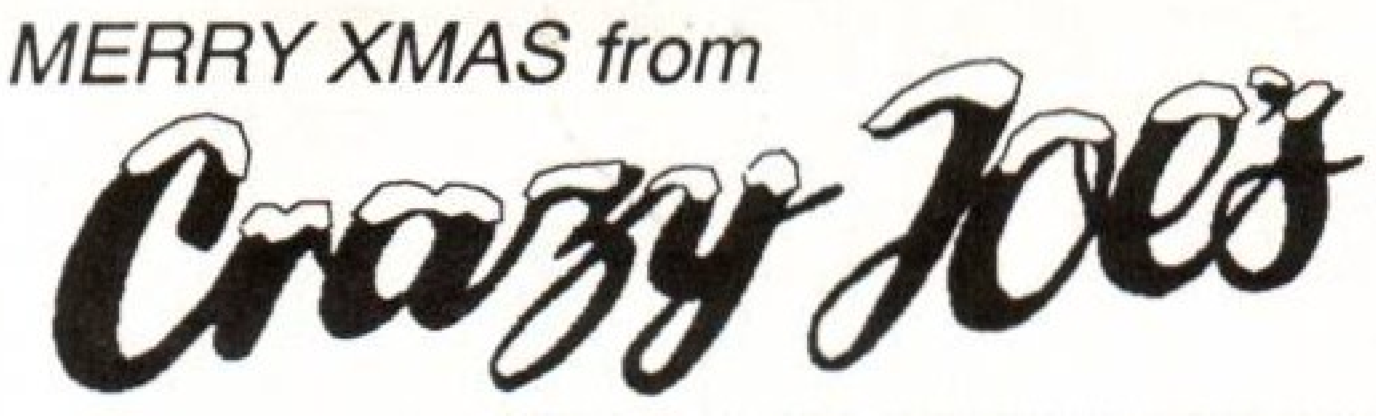
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CCPD308,309	Star Trek (AGAtron)
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CCPD351	Purple
CCPD355,356,357	Alcatraz Mega Demo 4 'Devil's Key'
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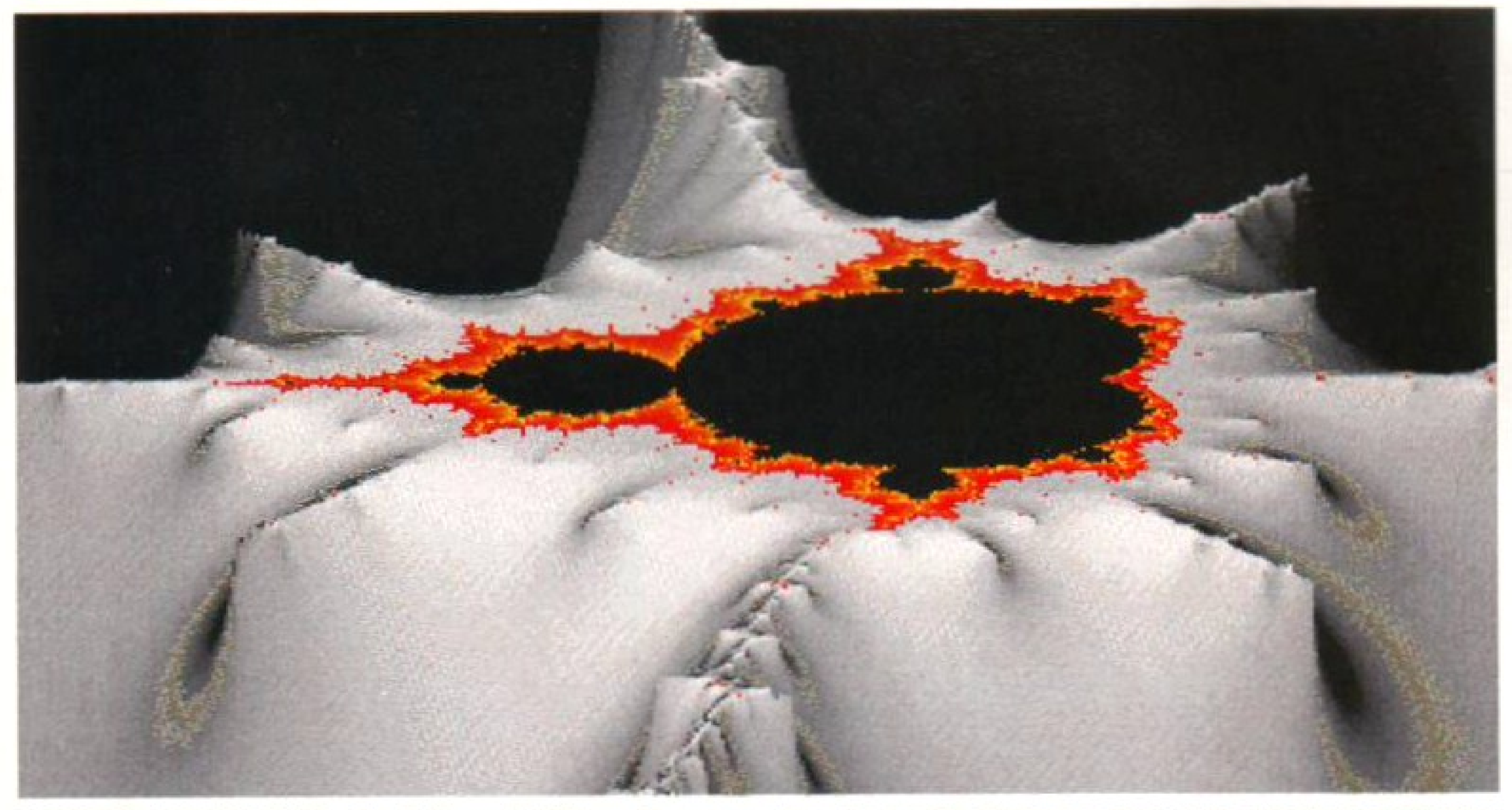
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T362 Kefrens Jukebox	T913 Tetracopy	G006 CC Games 22
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PD Update

It's great because it's free, but there's so much PD software around it's difficult to know what you should get. **PAT McDONALD** helps out by checking through the latest and recommending the best, while **MAFF EVANS** keeps his finger on the pulse of the ever-changing Demo scene.

MANDEL MOUNTAINS V2.1

AMIGANUTS 831



MANDEL MOUNTAINS: No Edmund Hillary is ever going to scale these peaks! This fractal generator maps the Mandelbrot images it produces as 3D shapes, with frequently breathtaking results.

The original *Mandel Mountains* created pictures that were truly original and caused many a yelp of delight. Rather than being a simple two-dimensional Mandelbrot generator, *Mandel Mountains* lets you look at Mandelbrot (and Julia) sets from different angles, and contours the effects into mountains and hills against a background of grey chaos.

Sounds strange eh? Using it is a mathematical exercise, mainly because there are lots of numbers to choose and change before the machine starts rendering the image. It's fun to bang in a few random numbers to create something new, zooming in on the image and turning around.

One point about *Mandel Mountains* (which is just as true of this upgrade as of the old version) is that takes a long time to generate the image – typically around half an hour or more. It's also probably of more interest to mathematics students than the average computer user, because they can understand much better how the end result comes from the numbers that are input.

It still produces very pretty pictures with the minimum of effort. If you've never seen a fractal before or you are bored with flat fractals, then take a look at *Mandel Mountains* – and don't forget to ask for V2.1, which is the latest release by the author, Matthias Ortmann.

DEEPER DOMAIN RETURNS

A big thank you comes from Gary Fenton, proprieter of The Deeper Domain PD library. As noted in AF16, Deeper Domain's library went walkies at the CES show. "So many people came forward with copies of our disks it was unbelievable. Thank you all."

"Thanks also to Cheetah Marketing, who accidentally took the library because they thought it contained some of their stand. They've since returned them, so we're back at our full capacity and open for business" said Gary.

AMERICAN STAR TREK

AMIGANUTS 812A, 812B
1 Meg minimum

Yet another *Star Trek* game on the PD circuit. This time it's from the States, written by a guy called Jimbo Barber. It's not a patch on Tobias Richter's *All New Star Trek* from the visual angle – either Jimbo didn't have a digitiser or he didn't want to include any visuals from the TV series.

Mind you, it's a winner in terms of depth. You have a five-year mission to complete, battling against the Klingons and Romulans – there's even a 'No Enemy' option for pacifists – and completing various ferrying duties for Starfleet.



AMERICAN STAR TREK: Klingons off the starboard bow, starboard bow, starboard bow... Captain. This a solid game and recommended for *Trek* fans, if lacking the fine presentation evident on Tobias Richter's *All-New Star Trek*.

All the maps are two-dimensional, and the movement in combat is a bit fiddly. The second disk contains sound effects from the series, which certainly adds to the atmosphere – if you have 2 Meg of memory then you can load them all in, rather than the program loading them from the second disk every time.

Continued on Page 192



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13 Lam an adventure game, good
20 Forgotten realms slideshow, impressive.
22 Kefrens mega demo 7, very good
24 Elvira game demo, terrific
26 Juggler demo, an old classic
31 The famous Probe Sequence
33 Amos, the game creator demo
43 Puggs in Space, one of the best
51 Enemies music 3, 16 great tunes.
65 Cryptoburners music, brill 9 tunes.
77 Dexlon music, 10 tracks very good.
78 Holy Grail, very good text adventure
79 The Education of Cool Cougar anim ★
95 Dexlon mega demo, very good, get it.
101 The famous gymnast demo excellent★
318 Dope the intro maker, make your own
323 Digital Concert 3, 12 mins of music
333 Digital Concert 4, more great music
341 Popeye meets the Beachboys, funny
383 Golden Fleece, brill text adventure
376 Reflections 1, half hour music
378 Reflections 2, over 40 mins of music
394 Stamp collector, animation
395 D-Mob music 2, 10 tracks, 26 mins long
416 The Definitive Jarre Show, music
440 Elite Major, music, ten tunes good.
441 Psuedo cop game, horizontal shoot em up.
444 Fillet the Fish, very good animation
448 Teutonics music CD4, more good stuff
455 Kefrens Jukebox Music, very good
458 Castle of Doom, adventure game
459 Buggy Commando, playable demo
530 Power Surge music disk 14 tunes, good.
529 Amiga chart 3, music by Radio Poland
528 Rebels Mega Blast, 9 fantastic tunes
522 Avirex Slideshow, great fantasy pictures.
520 Alcatraz Mega demo. DEVILS KEY 3 disks.
514 Flash Digital Concert 6, more good music
511 Train Construction Set, great game
509 Watership Down, lovely slideshow.
507 Sounds of Gnome, brill music by Mahoney
482 Channel 42, great, 35 high res pictures
484 Garfield Slideshow, all pictures in colour
478 Kylie Minogue "Made in heaven" 2 disks
34 Forgotten Realms, fantasy slideshow
44 Trilogy Mega demo, superb demo 2 disks
45 Kefrens Mega demo 8, Fantastic 2 disks
53 Nasa pictures, space picture slideshow
83 Miller Lite demo,"He ain't heavy" the Hollies
104 Yellow Mix, great acid type music.
115 Rebellion Music by 4 Matt, 5 great tunes.
121 Mental Hangover by Scoopex, great demo
132 Dragons Mega demo, a very good disk.
144 Music Maestro 6, Jukebox demo. 9 tunes
518 Rave Demo, way out music, crazy graphics
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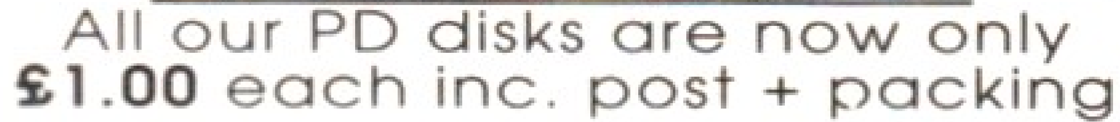
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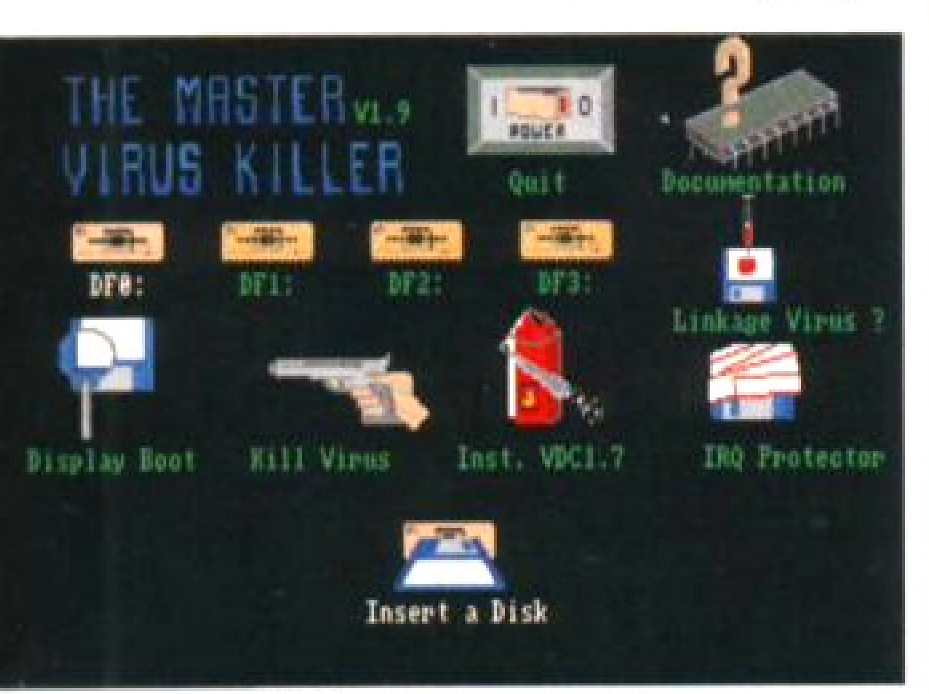
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In my opinion it's not as good as Tobias Richter's game, but it's quite enjoyable nonetheless. At the price I can still recommend this version highly. Mind you, I'm a Trekkie myself, so that's not really dreadfully surprising.

MASTER VIRUS KILLER V1.9

PDOM 300

Xavier LeClerq has lavished lots of care on programming this disk. It will recognise 63 different varieties of virus, making it one of the most powerful anti-virus products you can buy. The front end is well designed, and the documentation is comprehensive, if it is a little tortuous in places (English is not Monsieur LeClerq's first language).



MASTER VIRUS KILLER: A powerful virus killer which is fairly easy to use, considering the complexity of the program.

Indeed, the documentation will give you a clearer understanding of how viruses work and also how the program detects them. M LeClerq is very interested in acquiring copies of new viruses so that he can introduce an update as soon as possible.

There is also an animated demo included on the disk, although only people with 1 Meg or above will be able to appreciate it. A powerful program for checking whole disk collections, although it lacks the simplicity of *VirusX* or *ZeroVirus* for installation on your Workbench.

BATTLE-FORCE

SENLAC 551

Games based around the huge battling combot robots with human pilots are very popular. The official licence of the 'official' board game *BattleTech* was well received by fans of the genre, as was the film *Robot Jox*.

This PD offering – written by Ralph H Reed – is also pretty good, if a little light on graphics

Continued on Page 196

Demos Corner

'What's all this Amiga malarky then?'

'Well, you can do full overscan copper-rolling bitmapped font moving over a four-level parallax background with sampled sound.'

'Wassat then?'

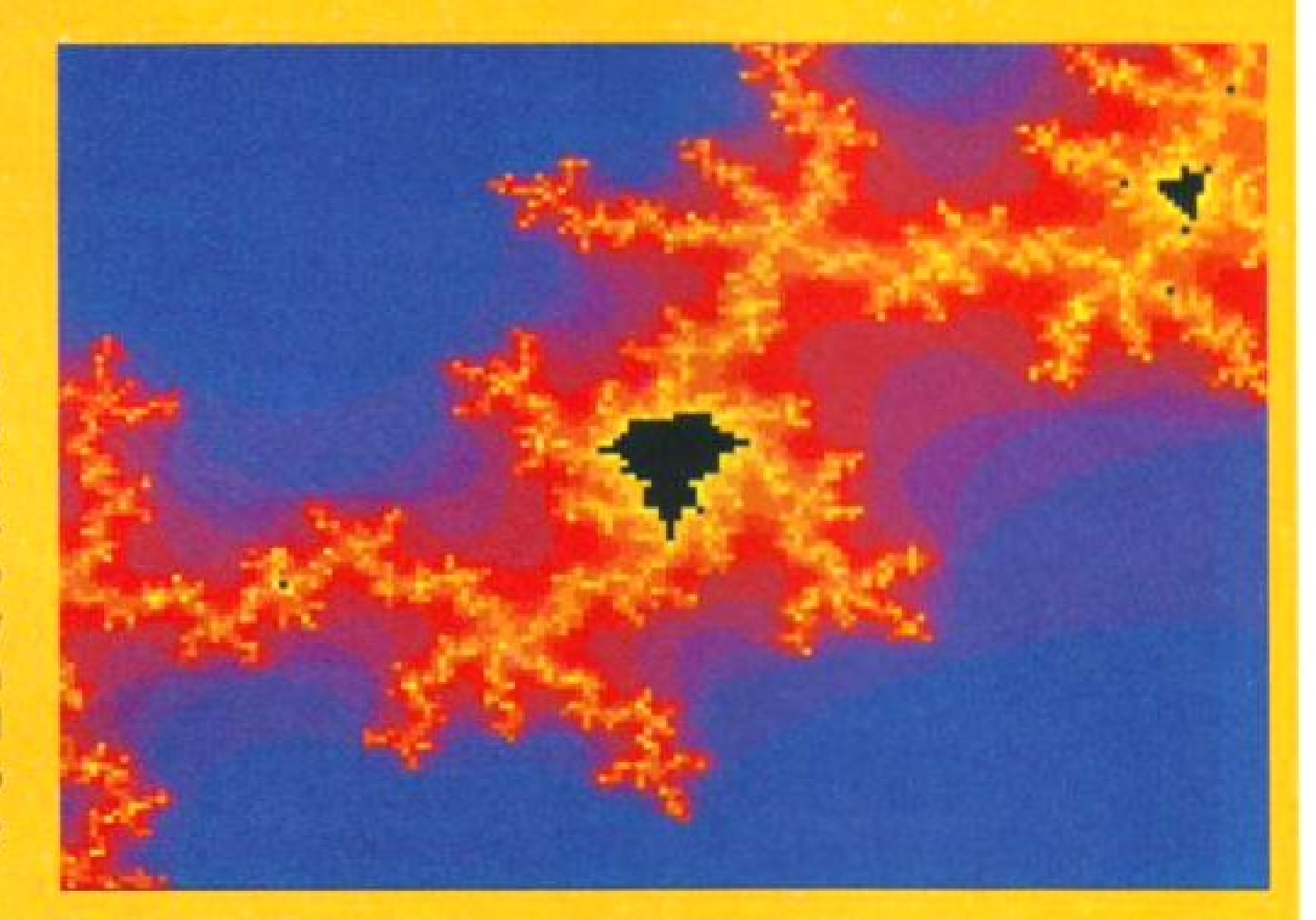
'Music with scrolly text all –'

Noises of extreme violence...

PMC FRACTAL DEMO

PD SOFT DISK 733

Anyone know much about fractal theory? Yes, we all know that you can make pretty pictures with them, but how do they work? This demo features animations to show the basic theory – namely the fact that if you zoom in on an area of a Mandelbrot Set, you'll reach another Mandelbrot and so on. A definite one for *Hardware* and Alan Moore fans.



CLOTHES PEG ANIMATION

PD SOFT DISK 734

Requires 1 meg

This anim features two rather pretty ray-traced logos bouncing between a couple of pegs and a spring. I know it sounds weird, but it's a very polished piece of animation which deserves a place in your collection.

SCOOPEX NO. 84

PD SOFT DISK 730

Once you've got past the rather dodgy intro menu with its creaky music, this disk contains a couple of nice effects. The first notable piece is the *Intoxication Demo*, which comprises a series of colourful drawings swirling in and out of existence across the screen. Also on the disk is Celtic's *Plasma Demo*, which employs a genuinely innovative use of coppers to produce some extremely psychedelic patterns. You can even use the joystick to create your own freak-out, swirling patterns.



IMP COMPETITION SLIDESHOW

AMIGANUTS UNITED DISK 815

If you're a fan of Amiga artwork, then this collection of hand-drawn piccies may be just the ticket. The subject matter ranges from swans, through cominc and film characters to demonic visions of hell, and the quality goes from pretty good to very good. There's no music to back the pictures, but the visuals are good and that's the main thing, isn't it?





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504 Network party pack • Very good demos
503 Suntrackers • Heavy metal music demo
501/502 Crusaders pack • by Bustman .. cool !
498 The JCS • Very weird demo .... very weird ...
497 Wild Copper • Old but still very good !
478 Dawn Megademo • Its just dawned on me
475 Hypnosis • Nice new demo pack
472 Crusaders • New demo pack with ED-209
453 Epic • Superb Preview of Ocean s Game
445 Anarchy CES Music pack • By 4 Mat. Cool ..
444 Start Demo Pack 5 • Nice new demo pack
443 Start Demo Pack 4 • More great new demos
440 Tropical Sunset • Great demo by Silents
437 Anarchy pack • Superb demo pack. Get it
429 DJ Disco Leif • Great house music remixes
426 Crionics Neverwhere • Wicked megademo !
423 Cool Fridge • Wild demos from Upfront
416 PE demos 68 • with the Donald duck anim !
394 Unique Vectors • Brilliant vector demo
314 Mirage Megademo • Superb ! but 1 Meg ..
313 Mag.Fields History • Nice collection of demos
305 Warfalcons Purple • Why Purple ?
304 Flash - Danish Know How • And they do ...
303 Scoopex Demos • Atron 1 and Green Suprise
301 Savage Demo 4 • A nice magedemo
300 Intuition Megademo • When is your next one
292 Mannys 1 Meg Collection • Nice big demos
261 Cryptoburners 2 • Ace demos from CRB
258 Rebels Candyland 11 • My favorite comp !
257 Crionics Megademo • Starring ..... Madonna !
254 tomsoft Tript to Mars • A great vector "Trip"
252/253 Budbrain Megademo •Just BRILL !
251 Silents Megademo • I like it ... dont I ?
173/174 Red Sector • When is your next Mega ?
164 Scoopex Mental Hangover • Wild !
148 Gate Megademo • Superb music and Gfx
142/143 Start 3 • Comp with Cebit 90 and Coma
140 Dragons Megdemo • Still very good !
136 Fraxion Horror • Still ..... Bleugh ...... Sick
109/110 Start 2 • Old but still gold ..nahhh !
101/102 Start 1 • Demo comp. older but bolder ?

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MUSIC MEWS

499 Slabby Music • Totally brilliant music demo
486 Kraftwerk• Brill Music demos
483 Jesus loves acid • Erm .... I dont think he does
425 Digital concert 6 • Fabulous remix !
424 Sound of Silents • I love it ! Brilliant stuff !
295 Alf • Music from the crazy alien
286 Rebels megablast • Supah music disk
272 Crusaders Project Beat • Great music
263 Sun Connection • Coooloo music
246 Adam M Music 1 • Crap Music disk (haha)
245 Beast Music • From scoopex coool !
242 100 64 tunes • Just get this disk SUPERB !!!
231 Darkstar Music 7 • 8 Great songs
230 Darkstar Music 6 • more ripped music
229 Darkstar Music 5 • Hello jez How are you ?
228 Darkstar Music 4 • More great music stuff
227 Jarre Docklands • Brilliant music from MrJarre
226 Beachboys meet popeye • Mad sample !
225 Digital Concert 5 • 4 Fabulous chart songs
224 Digital Concert 4 • Four more chart songs
223 Digital Concert 3 • 12 Minute megamix
222 Timecircle • Loads of great music
220/221 Dmob music 4 • Brilliant songs !
219 Technotronix • Get up and Pump up the jam
218 Kefrens jukebox • Absolutely superb !
197 Queen and Black box remixes
194 Crusaders Freeked out • Great mixes
186 Digital Concert 2 • A great 12 minutes !
145 Mahdney and Kaktus • Great music disk
141 Soundtracker Musics • Axel F,Doc,SII
133 Bacteria • BRILLIANT music from crusaders
107 Vangelis Demo • Superb demo 1 Meg

GAMES WAY

471 ST bash • Kill those Grey slabs of junk !!!
449 Computer Conflict • New game by Dr.Graffix
447 Recreation Games • Including Cluedo
283 Psuedo Cop • Shooty starring ED-209
282 Popeye Game • An LCD game on the Amiga
280 Mechforce • Good strategy war game
277 Board games • Backgammon and othello
276 Holy Grail • Great text adventure
274 The Golden Fleece Adventure game

ANIMATION ALLEY

474 Spacechase Anim • Very impressive ! 1Meg
458 Star Trek Manoeuvres • totally brill ! 1 Meg
457 Tron and Spaceship • Brilliant Anims 1 Meg
456 Stealthy 2 • Funny animation
455 Agatron 15 • £ anims inc. the red lotus anim
452 Enterprise leaving Dock • Amazing ... 1 Meg
419/420 Star Wars Movie • Quite good .. 1 Meg
398 Fractal Flight • Nice scenary demo 1 Meg
215 Real things demo • Horse animations
213/214 Mission • A 4 Meg animation !!!!
212 Star Trek Animations • Various 512K anims
207 Luxo Teenager • The Lamp anim 1Meg
206 Newtons Cradle • and more animations
202/203 Star Wars Anim • X wing fighters 1 Meg+
201 Indiana Jones • Cracking good (ha) 1 Meg
198 The Run • 3D car chase by T.Richter 1 Meg
192 Walker 1 • The helicopter version 1 Meg
193 Walker 2 • The A2000 being attacked 1 Meg
190 The Juggler • Oldy but goldie !
189 The Gymnast • Nice swinging anim 1 Meg
165 Juggette • Mrs Juggler animation
153 Puggs inspace • Great little demo/anim
113 Magician and Jogger • Good anims 1 Meg
112 Spaceship Anim • Flying round a 3D globe
106 The ElGato and Juggler Animtions • 1 Meg
104 Happy Man Anims • With more
103 Ghost pool and Dripping Tap • Good. 1 Meg

SLIDESHOW WALK

493 Vax Picture show • pics taken from a Vax !
489 Doxo • Garbage patch kid Slideshow
488 Traveller • Excellent HAM Fantasy slides
484 Color Cycles • Totally brilliant color cycling
461 Yabba Dabba • The Flintstones ! Supah !
454 Nightbreed • Superb Nasty Slideshow !
205 Agatron 8 • Excellent stuff from Tobias Richter
200 Roger Dean • Pics by this superb Artist
191 Forgotton Realms • Hobgoblin Slideshow
183 Nagel Pics • Pics from this talented artist
158 Agatron 6 • The definitive Slideshow ! Superb
139 Real 3d • Very impressive 3D slides
137/138 Silents Slideshow • Brilliant digishow
134/135 Fraxion Divine Visions slideshow • Great

UTILITY STREET

505 Mac Clip art • Superb clipart from a Mac
496 Visicalc • An impresive spreadsheet
495 RIM • A relational database.
494 ARP V1.3 • AmigaDOS replacement project
490 GMC • Games music creator
485 Startrekker • 8 Channel Noisetracker ! Wild !
480/481/482 The QL Emulator • Emulate a QL !
466/467/468 Countach Clip art • Very good stuff
464 Sozoban C • Very good C compiler
460 Iconmania • Brilliant collection of icons utils
459 Jamcracker • Superb Chip sound music util
434 Amibase • Very simple to use database
378/379/380 C Manual • Superb Eg's and texts
377 North C Compiler • The latest version 1.1
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356 Fish 327 • The MSH messidos PC file system
354 SID 1.6 • Superb directory utility Get it now
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340 Jazzbench • Useful new workbench
334 Darkstar Utils 2 • Great utility disks compiled
130 Darkstar Utils 3 • by Red Devil
333 Darkstar Utils 4 • Hi Rob how ya do'in ?
332 Pendle Utils 5 • More supah kool utilities
331 Pendle Utils 6 • Sid,Tetracopy,newzap...
332 Pendle Utils 7 • The ST 28 superb utilities
328/329 Bootblock collection • for boot editing
180 Wordwright • with SGcalc and Labelprint
129 Mystix DIY Hardware modifications disk !
127/128 TV Graffix • Great Dpaint utils and fonts
123 ST-91 • Samples disk for music utils by Start
122 ST-90 • More great samples by Start
120 ST-02 • lots of Nice synthy samples
119 ST-01 • The original samples disk !
118 Noisetracker • So good ... even I use it ....
117 Future Composer • Good music maker
114 Intromaker • Make scrolly music demos

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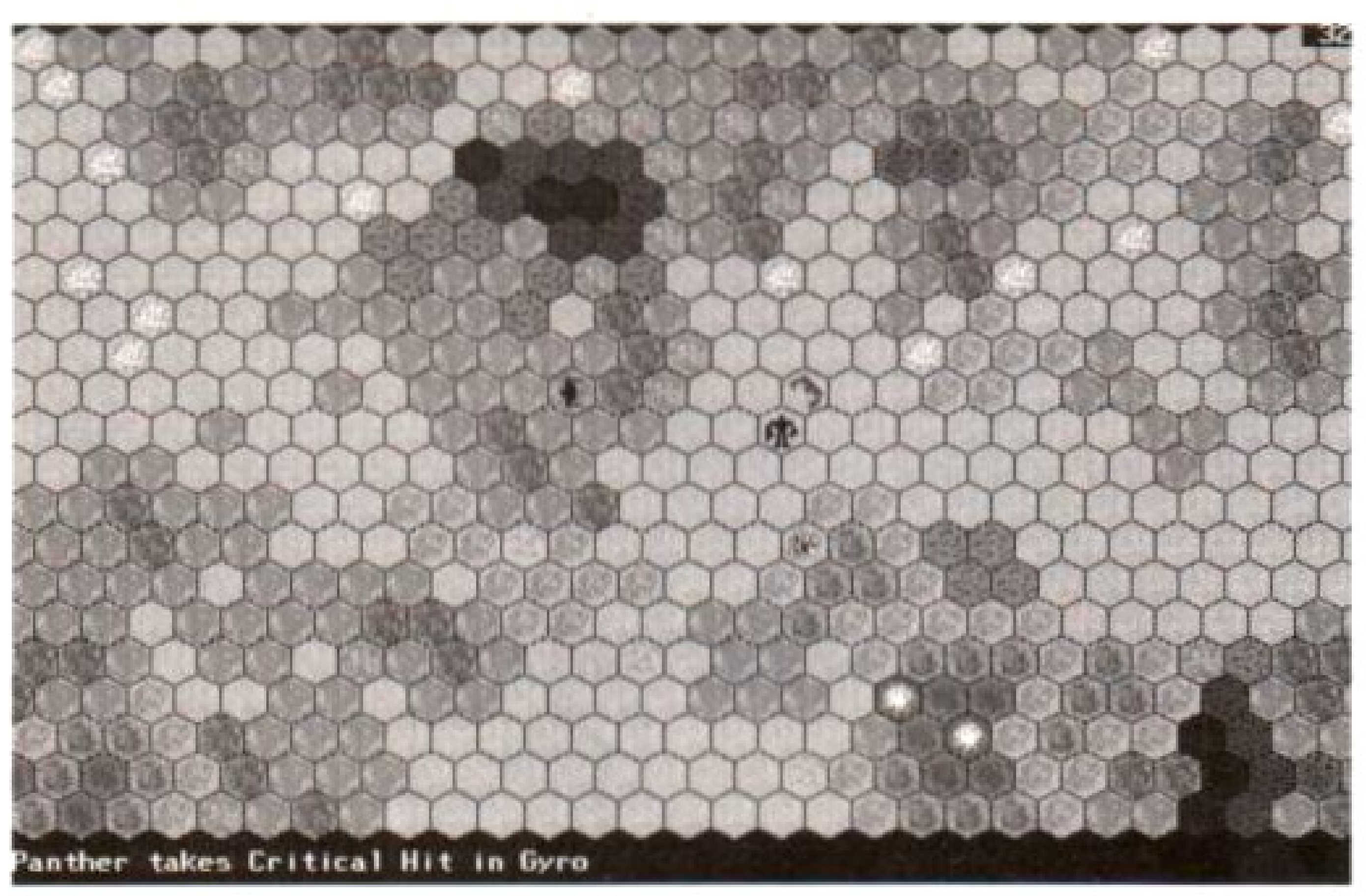
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BATTLEFORCE: There's a large playing area and plenty of options for combat in this well-thought-out BattleTech game, even if the robot graphics are weak.

and heavy on statistics. You can choose to play in a trainer, in an arena or in a war situation. Lots of different types of battle mechs (the technical term for a combat robot) are included on the disk, so you're unlikely to get bored.

The map for the conflict can be edited and, in fact, the editor program is very user friendly indeed. Random maps are not jumbled up areas, but can include clusters of water, sand, forest, marshes, mountains and so on.

The mech pilots can be saved between combats and as they grow in experience they fight much better, with more chance of success. There isn't a computer opponent option, which is a pity, but then computer opponents are usually poor at this sort of game.

If you're a hardened BattleTech addict, check this disk out. It's not flashy or quick, it's deep and rich. It will provide a lot of fun, once you've read the excellent tutorial on playing the game.

10 PIN BOWLING STATISTICS
AMIGANUTS 834

Wacky Carrot Software (aka Mark Ward) strikes again with a strange program – it's for recording scores at 10-Pin Bowling. You can create logs, files, individual or team statisics, and generally make sure that you always know your best ever attempt. Using it isn't a problem, although the program does appear to use two drives rather than one. So don't get it unless you have more than one floppy drive.

A-GENE
AMIGANUTS 813

Family trees are notoriously difficult to record by computer. All the branches and twists, plus the added complexity of somebody marrying, having children, the spouse dies, remarrying, more children – a complex proposition.

A-Gene was designed to do just this arduous task and copes admirably well. The number of people and marriages can be custom tailored to your needs and family trees can be printed out. Where it falls down is in user-friendliness. Although the documentation does the best it can for such a complex task, it is not easy and takes a while to get used to.

That said, it's in a class of its own, because I don't think any other program does the same job

Continued on Page 201



10 PIN BOWLING: The latest example of Wacky Carrot Software is useful for keeping your best scores and analysing your stats, but only if you're keen on the American big ball game.

Demos Corner

AMIGANUTS ANIMATIONS
AMIGANUTS UNITED DISK 634



If you've seen the adverts for the *Walt Disney Animation Studio* package, then the first anim on this disk will be familiar. The short cartoon features Donald 'the' Duck experiencing problems we all encounter from time to time – a computer. Aargh! The second piece is a little ray-traced windmill by TMS. How nice!

JOEL HAGEN ANIMATIONS
ADS DISK 2
Requres 1 meg

This disk contains two bijou little 'filmettes', one of which is the near-classic *RGB Hazard* clip featuring the old 'stretchy nose' gem. The other is an introduction to plane mathematics, with a rather interesting twist...

LAUREL AND HARDY DEMO
PUBLIC DOMINATOR DISKS 301 AND 302
Requires 2 drives

All you classic comedy fans who are lucky enough to own two drives can now show off your Amiga's power while enjoying some golden moments from Stan and Ollie. That is, if you can drag anyone away from the video for long enough to show it off! That's another fine mess...



MUSIC PLEASE...

As well as the usual bounce-about graphics and animation demos available, there are also quite a few music disks. Here are few of the baddest tracks around. Hit me with that nasty beat DJ! *(Right, that's enough of that crap street tuff stylee speak. Get on with the disks – Ed.)*

SILENTS FULL POWER
PDOMINION DISK 029

This is a cracking collection of New Beat and Acid tracks ranging in style from chart-dance, via LFO to more obscure style tracks in the Cabaret Voltaire mould. If you get the disk and you are thoroughly impressed by what you hear, then you can send off for a tape featuring more of the same. Details on the disk.

ANARCHY MUSIC
AMIGANUTS UNITED 835

Complete with a rather pretty patterned-scrolling backdrop, this music disk contains the usual PD-style ditties along with a superb rendition of the Art of Noise's Close to the Edit. Unfortunately, the 'Cl-cl-cl-close, to-to-to the edge' sample is missing! Aw!

CHARLES DANCE MUSIC
PD SOFT DISK 702

No graphics and only two tunes, but they're good. '71Hz Overload' is compiled from various dance samples and sounds a little bitty, but 'Party Love' is a superb Acid-style jaunt which is worth a listen.

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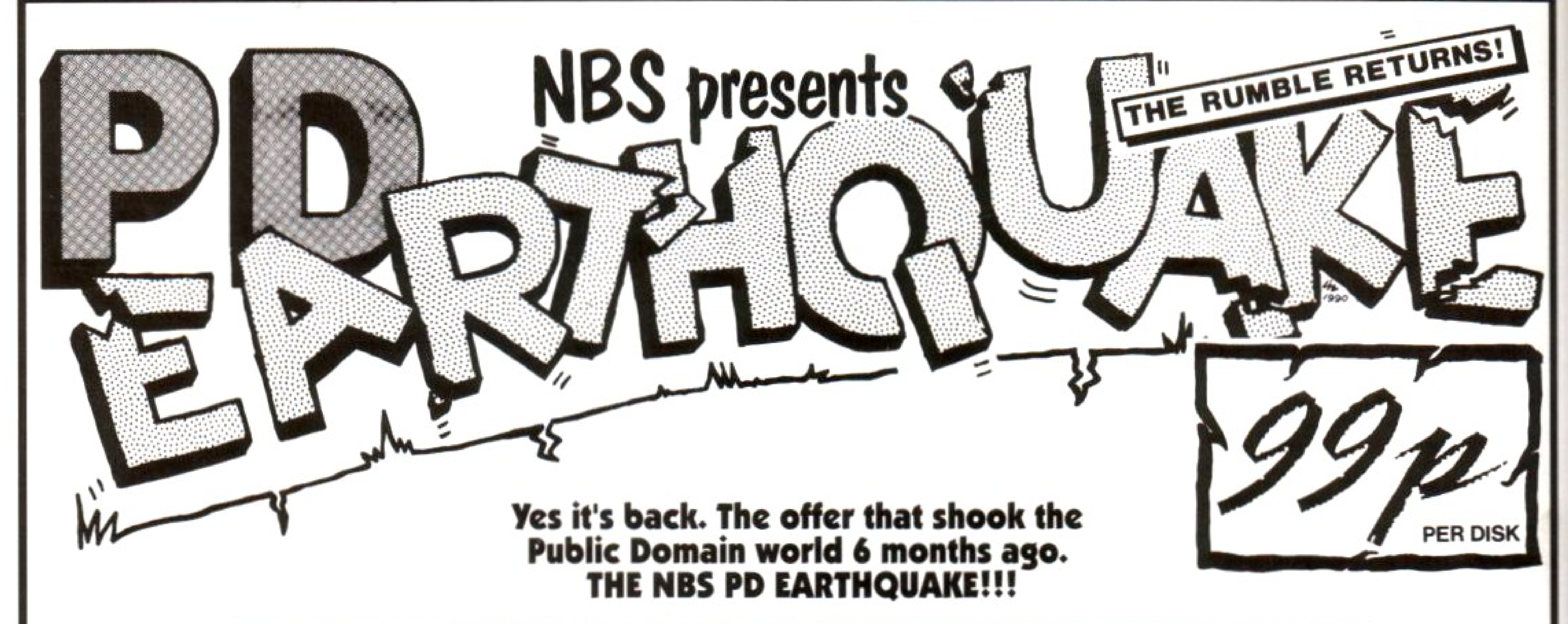
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Public domain software comes from 2 main sources. The first is where someone has written a useful little utility, which is of use to the writer and hence almost certainly of use to other Amiga users, but has no commercial value. The second is from enthusiastic Amiga owners who just love to show off their coding prowess, possibly to impress their mates, to prove to a software house their ability to code graphics, or just give pleasure to thousands of other Amiga enthusiasts. In the early days, much of the PD left a lot to be desired, but these days there are many fantastic utilities, games and demos which, at a nominal cost can bring many hours of pleasure, and there is now a veritable army of PD collectors. All true PD is without copyright and can be freely copied and used as you want, providing you adhere to any conditions stated on the disk. PD distributors should not make a profit on the disk, but charge on the service they provide. NBS provides one of the best and most helpful services available today, but please don't take my word for it, try us! If you have just acquired your Amiga, we recommend the following disks, which will either amaze, amuse, or be very useful. NBS disks are divided into the following groups:

D = Demos G = Games M = Music U = Utilities. All titles are only 99p per disk. (Some titles are 2 or more disks)

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D 034 BUDBRAIN MEGADEMO. Our No1 title! Fantastic and funny, but contains some X-rated cartoons....may offend! (2 disks)
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D 315 UNREAL DEMO A game demo to show off some great graphics.
X 110 FRAXION HORROR Great cartoon graphic demo of nasty stuff.
M 005 MAHONEY & KAKTUS Brilliant music disk
M 030 DIGITAL CONCERT 2: Over 12 mins of mixed house music.
M 070 CRUSADERS BACTERIA Stunning sound and graphics.
M 170 NEWTRONS MUSIC DISK 'HEADBANGER' You will not believe this!!
G 107 STAR TREK GAME Good graphic adventure, Best with 1 meg (2 disks)
G 109 BLIZZARD Good horizontal Shoot 'em Up.
G 133 PD GAMES COMPO Good selection inc Welltrix and Breakout.
G 136 DRIP Very tricky painter type game. Almost commercial quality!
G 137 THE TURN and TRICKY A couple of good puzzle games by Peter Handel.
G 138 MARBLE SLIDE A cross between Pipemania and sliding blocks. Great!!
U 220 SID A good utility to take the hard work out of CLI.
U 222 NBS SPEEDBENCH A faster loading workbench, plus some handy utilities.
U 225 AMIBASE A good database. Start a disk catalogue now.
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D 193 COOL COUGAR... Digi piccy with cartoon overlays. Clever! (1 MEG)
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M 119 DIGITAL CONCERT 5...And yet another!
M 127 DIGITAL CONCERT 6... And the latest music mix!
M 128 SOUND OF THE SILENTS...Great music from Jesper Kydd. Nice FX
M 134 100 C64 TUNES...together with graphics from the old days.
M 138 RAF MEGA MIX 1...similar to digital concert .
M 147 TSB MUSIC...Disco and Heavy music. Turn it up!
M 150 ALCATRAZ SOUND DISK..Very classy show. Digi of "I Got The Power"
M 162 TRIUMPH MUSIC DISK 7...More of the best demo tunes.
M 165 THE WINKERS SONG BY IVON BIGGUN..Oops!

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D 324 THE XMAS SONG...That very naughty Australian song (2 DISKS)
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M 172 AULD LANG SYNE...Jive Bunny strikes again!!
M 173 BAND AID CHRISTMAS SONG...Do they Know its Christmas

GAMES

G 114 BOARDGAMES...Cluedo, Monopoly, Crib, Backgammon, plus.
G 115 MIXED GAMES...6 good games including DALEKS!!
G 135 TESTAMENT GAMES COMPO...Typical PD Games
G 140 MONOPOLY....Good one player game. Drawback.. U.S version.

UTILITIES

U 221 JAZZBENCH...Enhanced workbench with pull-down menus.
U 222 Speedbench...Faster loading workbench
U 214 D COPY...Back-up utility from the D-mob Group
U 216 NBS UTILITY DISK 3...3rd Day, Utilmaster, Newzap, 20 in all
U 217 NBS UTILITY DISK 4...Disk Arranger, Fix Disk, 20 more...
U 220 SID-THE ULTIMATE CLI UTILITY...That's what it says!

With so many disks in our library it is impossible to list them all here. We have many new disks coming in every day, so if you see a disk featured in these pages, and we don't list it, give us a call.

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4	UPDATPER	Updates Information in the Persons File.
5	UPDATMAR	Updates Information in the Marriages File.
6	UPDATORD	Updates Information in the Baptisms File.
7	INDEXPC	Creates a Parent/Child Index. (For 13, 16 and 18.)
8	INDEXMAR	Creates a Marriages Index. (For 15, 16, 17 and 18.)
9	PRINTPER	Prints Information about Persons.
10	PRINTMAR	Prints Information about Marriages.
11	LISTPER	Prints a List of the Persons in the Persons File.
12	LISTMAR	Prints a List of the Marriages in the Marriages File.
13	LISTPCI	Prints a List of the Parent/Child Index.
14	ALPHAPER	Prints an Alphabetical List of Persons.
15	ALPHAMAR	Prints an Alphabetical List of Marriages.
16	DISPLAY	Displays Genealogical Information on the Screen.
17	PEDIGREE	Prints Pedigree Charts (Family Trees).
18	FAMILY	Prints Family Group Sheets.
19	DESCEND	Displays (and Optionally Prints) Descendents Charts.

(0 to quit, 20 to restart the MENU)
Enter a Program Number and press RETURN.? |

A-GENE: If you want to trace your ancestors and construct a family tree, this is not the easiest program to use: but you can get good results with a little patience. And it's easier than pen and paper.

with the same potential. Really, it's a question of how patient you are, and genealogy is a notoriously tedious job – there is a lot of research involved.

If you really want to have a go at putting in your family tree, this beats pen and paper hands down. There's actually two versions on the disk – one for Anglicans, and one for Mormons, who are allowed polygamous marriages. Not a lot of people know that. Considering that the program was written by an Australian (Mike Simpson), the Morman extra is a thoughtful feature.

TEXTPLUS 2.0E

AMIGANUTS 832

People are often appalled at the price of word processors. There is



TEXTPLUS: If you want a good, simple word processor but don't fancy paying out lots of cash for a proprietary one, try this instead. Nothing fancy, but it does a perfectly good job.

an alternative – *Textplus* is a simple word processor for those who don't want fancy solutions or fonts. It's menu driven, and has many standard features.

You can mark, copy and move blocks of text around. You can set underline, bold, italics and combinations of these effects for text. It's nothing fancy, certainly, but it will do the job if you just want something for writing standard letters and forms.

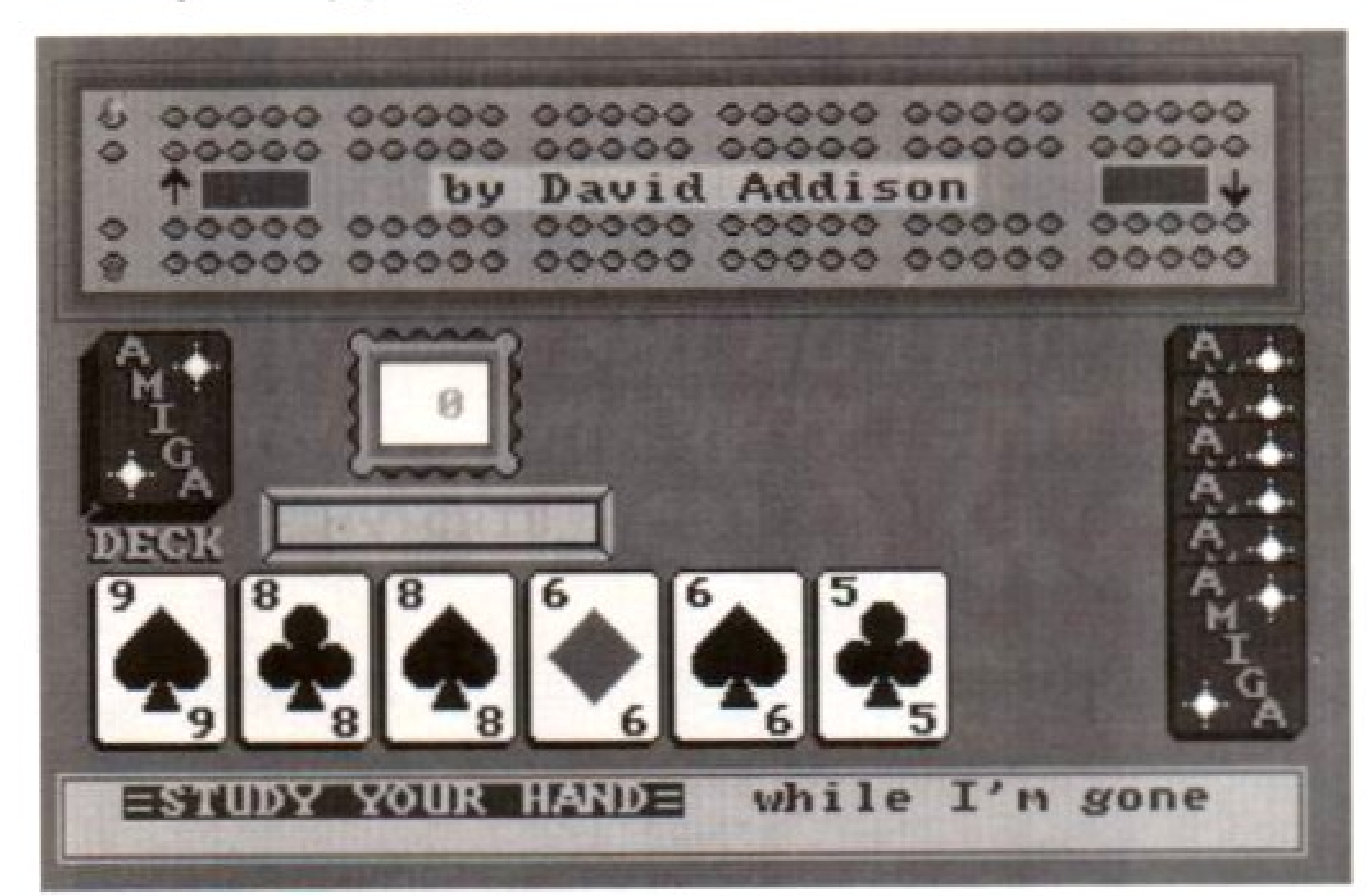
Martin Steppler has done a good job on the program. It really is very simple to use, and the documentation is adequate. Worth looking out for.

CRIBBAGE

SENLAC 399

If you like playing the card game *Cribbage* but you can rarely find someone to play against, this disk will be of interest to you. You play against the computer, so there's problem finding yourself some competition – and it's not that easy to beat it consistently.

The scoring uses the traditional pegs in a board, which is represented around the edge of the screen. The cards are shuffled quickly, and cut decides who gets the first crib. This version by David Addison is an absorbing game for the cards afficianado.



CRIBBAGE: If you want a game but have no opposition, play this. Not a bad hand, but what has the computer got up its sleeve?

TOP TEN UTILITIES NBS	TOP TEN DEMOS NBS
1. Sid	1. Space Fighter Animation (D545)
2. Sound/Noise Tracker	2. All New Star Trek (G107)
3. NBS Speedbench	3.Epic Game Demo (D537)
4. Ghost Writer	4. Budbrain Megademo (D034)
5. Amiga C Manual	5. Crusaders Bacteria (M070)
6. Razor Tooldisk	6. Crionics Neverwhere (D078)
7. Virus X	7. Intuition Megademo (D081)
8. Master Virus Killer	8. The Run (D510)
9. Demolisher Megadisk	9. Fractal Flight (D520)
10. Jazzbench	10. RSI Megademo (D146)

SUPPLIERS

This list contains, as far as we know, all the companies, PD libraries and user groups currently distributing Public Domain software in this country. Do please note that prices may vary and we are not recommending any of these above any other. For full addresses, look for the advertisements in Amiga Format or give them a ring on the numbers listed here.

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• AMICUS 17 - Communication packages: COMM v1.33 - XMODEM/WXMODEM, Aterm V7.2, VT-100 V2.6 VTek V2.3.1, Amiga Host V0.9 for CompuServe.
• FFISH 195 - Micro Emacs V3.10 the text editor which is very comprehensive.

UTILITY

• FFISH 366 - PrintStudio V1.2 print any text file in many styles, print part of or a whole picture, screen or window, also control printer and much more.
• FFISH 362 - ArchEdge V1.5 a shell that can be configured for most programs. Already setup for ARC, ZOO, LHARC etc.
• FFISH 327 - MSH handles MSDOS formatted disks exactly the same way as you use files on native AmigaDOS disks. Fully functional, read/write version.
• FFISH 342 - IE V1.0 is an icon editor which can create and modify icons upto 640x200 pixels.
• PDOM 278 - LHARCa V0.99a data compression program hat is 100% compatible with MSDOS LHARCV1.13c.
• PDOM 279 - European Software Agency Utility 1: Amiga Tool V1.5, Boot DIntro V1.0, BootGenerator V1.5, BootLeg V2.1, Character Editor V1.0,Coder Board V4.0, Cosaque V1.1, DCopyII, Deluxe Presed V2.0, BlockV1.3, Font Ripper, Guru Maker V1.0, ISC Amiga v1.5, memory SearcherV1.0, Menu Maker v1.0, No1 Setracker V1.0, Power Utility V2.0, PowerPacker V2.3a, PPMore V1.2, Pseudo Ops. Save IFF, Scanner V2.0,Scroll Maker 2, Seek Destroy V1.0, Seka Source Rescuer, StartupCoder V1.0, Structure HunterV1.0, Time Cruncher V1.1, TVFieldWriter V1.1, Vector Check V1.0, View Boot V1.01, Virus Expert V1.4, Virus Slayer V1.0, Virus Killer V3.10.
• PDOM 280 - The Champions Total Utilies Vol 1: Boot Generator, Boot Girl,Bootmaker, BootWriter, Character Editor, Demo Maker, DiskX v2.2, Flash Ripper, Font Ripper, Guru Maker, Guru Master, Icon Master,Make A Menu, NoiseTracker, Power Packer V2.3b, PPMore, PPShow,Sceneray, Graphics Searcher, SetKey, SlideSHow Maker, Time Set,Tristar Virus KillerTxED.
• TBAG 28 - MachII features: configurable, your help screen, mouse accelerator, PopCLI, Screen Blanker, Mouse OFF, Sun Mouse (activates a window byplacing mouse it), Click To Front (bring window to front by clicking on it), Cycle (move a window or screen to back with left then right mouse button click), Window and Screen Shuffler, CLock, Alarm, Beeper etc. DiskSalv V1.32 is a disk recoverer. NewZap file sector editor.
• TBAG 30 - MyMenu create your own menu on WB to run any commands. Icon Meister V1.4 THE Icon editor. SYSCheck checks your boot disks libraries. Disk Storage Deluxe V1.10 shows details of ALL mounted devices.
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• PDOM 300 - The Master Virus Killer V1.9. Recognises 62 viruses, a full list is on our DiskCat.
• PDOM 62 -The Public Dominator Anti Virus Disk: Virus X V4.1, VCheck V1.2 (for memory), VCheck V1.9 (for disk drives), Zero Virus V1.3the fully integrated virus detector and killer. Also Boot Block Champion the utility and information on boot blocks.
• PDOM 93 -ARP v1.3. The AmigaDOS Replacement Project includes text manual files.
• FFISH 243 - ImageLab V2.2 is an IFF pictures manipulator. NoClick V3.5 stops the disk drive clicking if there is no disk in the drive. PassWord V1.21p you specify the password for your system security. Pcopy V2.0 the excellent disk copier. SimGen adds a 2 or 4 colour picture to your WB screen.
• FFISH 244 - BBChampion V3.1 load, save and analyze boot blocks. BootIntro V1.2 you specify. The headline text of upto 44 characters and the scrolling text of upto 300.
• FFISH 279 - MRBackup v3.3d the hard disk backup utility.
• FFISH 300 - TitleGen v1.6 excellent script language that creates scrolling text on screen in any font and upto 500 lines long!
• FFISH 213 - 300 8 colour program icons!
• FFISH 168 & • FFISH 169 - Matt Dillion disk special includes loads of utilities and source: Config V1.0, Clock V1.0, DME V1.31, DMouse V1.1, Backup V2.01, SUPLIB, LIBREF, DRES V1.0, DASM V2.11,FILES V1.2, SHELL V2.1, FINDIT V1.0, LIBS V1.0, SCAT V1.0, ADDCR V1.0, REMCR V1.0 & CMP V1.0You need both disks.
• FAUG 41 - ARC V0.2 compatible with MSDOS ARC V5.0.
• AMICUS 22 - Printer Driver Generator V2.3.
• FFISH 158 - MSDOS V0.1 lists files written in standard MSDOS or ST format, then copies them to RAM then rewrites to disk in AmigaDOS format. DiskX is a sector based disk editor.
• FFISH 290 - XIcon a CLI command scriptor and executor.
• FFISH 258 - DMouse v1.2 is a versatile program that includes screen/mouse blanker, auto window activator, mouse accelerator, popcli, pop window to front, push to back etc.
• FFISH 131 - DFC is a disk copier that multi-tasks.
• APDC 15 - Icon utilities: full of icon files and creators. Some animated!
• APDC 18 - Floppy Disk Utils: Quick Copy V1.0, Disk Mapper, Disk Salvage, Virus check, System Utils: Blitz V1.0 text editor, TimeSet, ACalc calculator Amiga Monitor V1.1, MeM Grab fast memory grabber. Directory Master V1.1.
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• PDOM 104 - Complex BOBs.
• PDOM 105 - DOC. No we are not dead!
• PDOM 114 - Slipstream Sineintro 1+2, Equalogo II, Terminator.
• PDOM 146 & • PDOM 147 - Monty Python Nudge Nudge sketch.
• PDOM 148 - Escape from Singes Castle animation.
• PDOM 150 - Scoopex Mental Hangover.
• PDOM 188 - Crypto Burner CD Player.
• PDOM 193 - Red Devil of Dark Star UK Muzak 4.
• PDOM 195 - SlipStream Music 7.
• PDOM 207 and • PDOM 208 - Kefrens Mega Demo 8!
• PDOM 214 - Fractal Flight. 1MB.
• PDOM 217 - Alpha Flight Demo Creator.
• PDOM 222 - Titanics Acid House music disk.
• PDOM 229 & • PDOM 230 & • PDOM 231 - Alcatraz Mega Demo 4 'The Devil's Key'.
• PDOM 236 - Mr Turnip from APEX : Cebit 90, Coma and others.
• PDOM 241 - Anarchy Compact A.
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• PDOM 250 - North Star Acid Demo 1989.
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• FFISH 295 - Mandel Mountains V1.1 a Mandel Brot generator.

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• PDOM 211 - NORTHC v1.2 Steve Hawtins C compiler. Features compiler, linker, disassembler, examples and tools. An excellent C compiler for the knowledgeable and beginner alike.
• APDC 25 - Logo, XLisp, Modular 2, MVP Forth.
• FFISH 140 - Stoney Brook PROLOG v2.3.2.
• FFISH 141 - Contains the source code for PROLOG FFISH 140.
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• FFISH 193 - ZC V1.01.
• FFISH 201 -Draco V1.2 the excellent programming language by Chris Gray. Documentation on FFISH 77.
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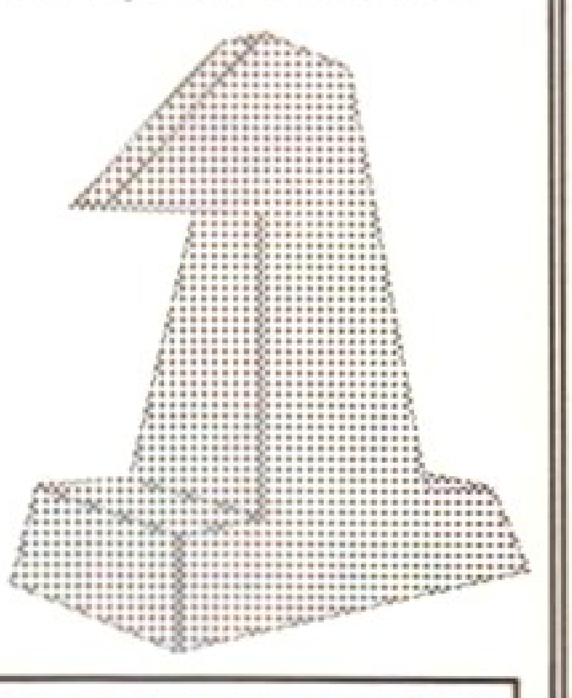
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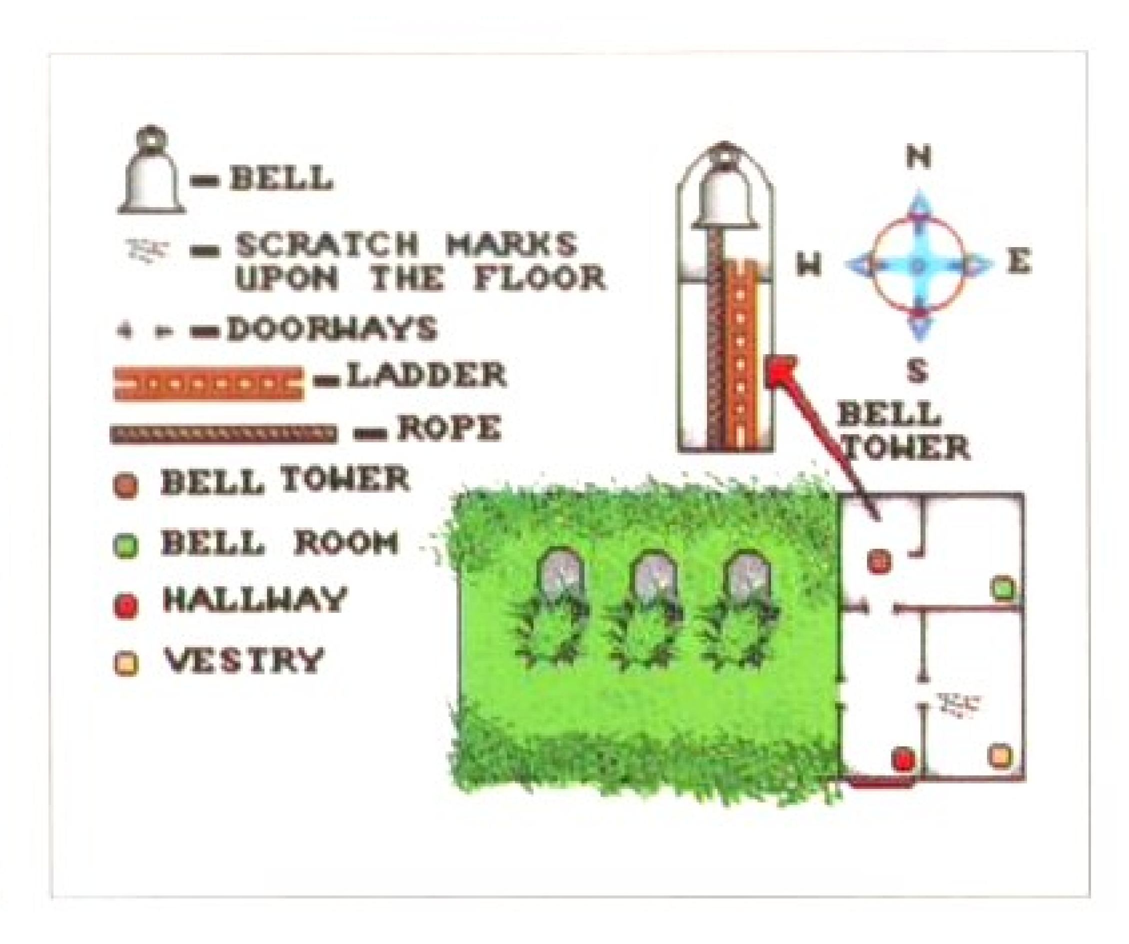
'Good King Wenceslas looks out on his new Amiga.
Can't get Level Three sussed out, though he is quite eager.
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What he needs is **MAFF EVANS** to help him with his wi-i-nning!'

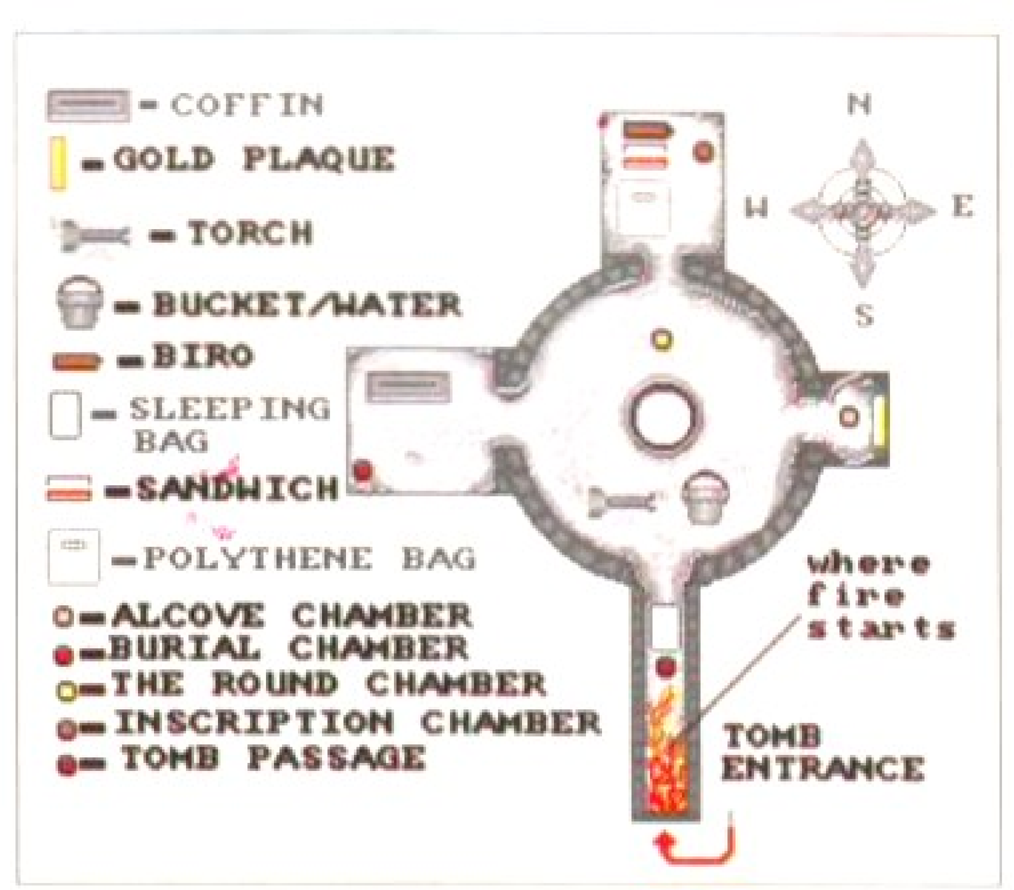
DEMON'S TOMB

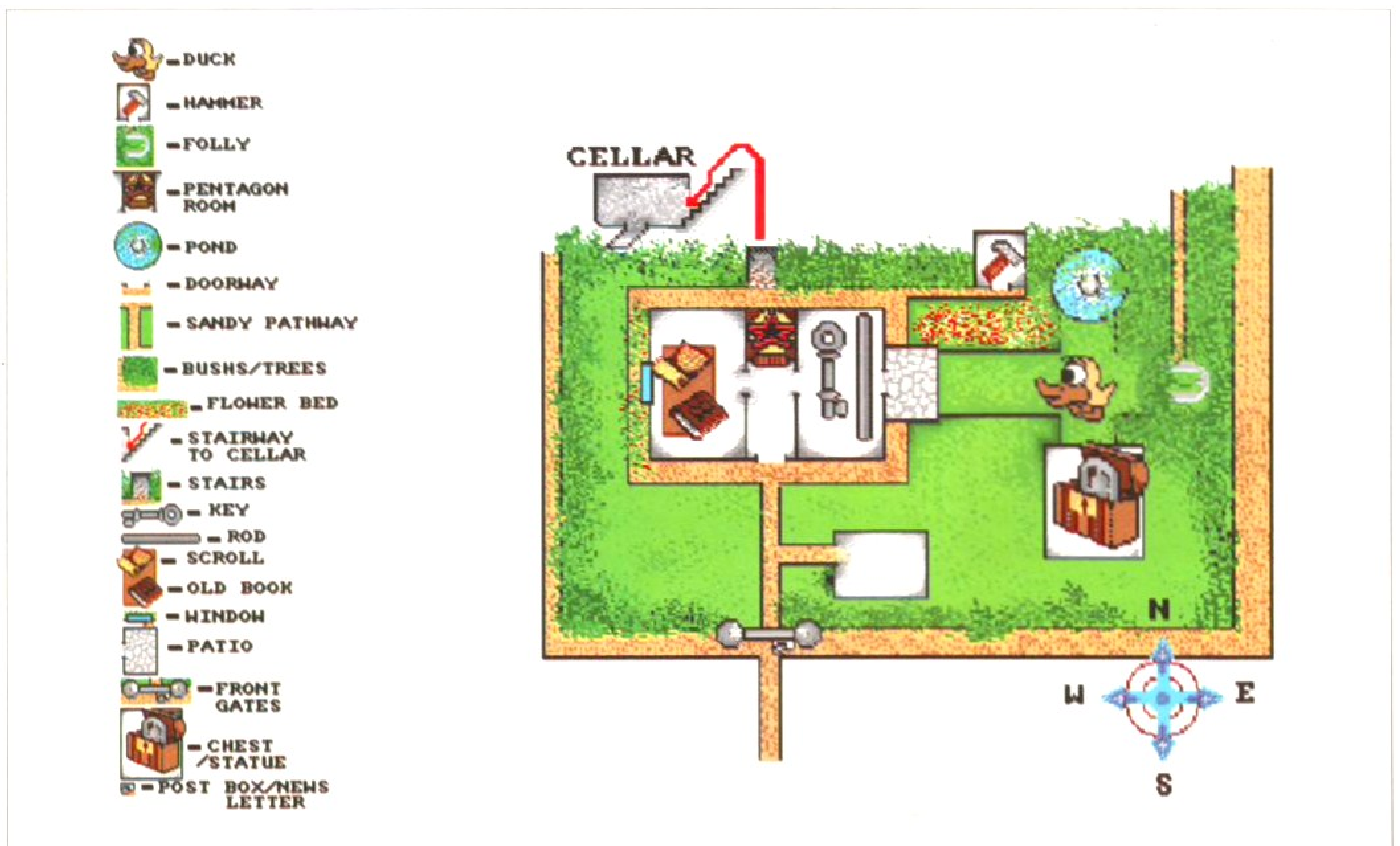
There aren't many text adventures being released these days, and this one isn't too bad at all. However, wandering around a text quest may be a little confusing, so have one of these here maps. Oh, go on – they're good for you.

'Ooh, don't mind if I do!'

Maps sent in by:
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PANG

Although it's basically a matter of splitting the bouncing balls, collecting the pick-ups and avoiding the odd creature as you wing your way around the world racking up the points, *Pang* has a surprise or two on some of its screens. Here are a few of them, complete with tips to help you on your way



Stage 2-5: Having shot all the platforms you are rewarded with an extra life.



Stage 3-9: The first of many levels where having the vulcan missile will prevent completion.



Stage 5-13: By rushing up to the top right you can make light work of this level.



Stage 11-31: That floor is quite a problem: it makes it impossible to collect some power-ups.

STAGE 2-5
If you shoot away all the platform sections on this level, a brown and white object will drop. Collect it and you will gain an extra life.

STAGE 3-9
Three balls in an enclosure at top left can only be reached if you shoot away the platform section beneath them. This can't be done if you have the vulcan missile. If you are unlucky enough to get a vulcan missile, try to get a bomb to split them so they can fall down.

STAGE 4-12
Again, shoot all the platform sections to get an extra life. Work from the left and the large ball on the right will remain trapped until you feel like dealing with it.

STAGE 5-13
The best way is to go straight to the top right, just past the end of the top platform, and blast all the balls as they bounce off the end. One or two will escape, but go back to the left hand end of the platform to mop them up. Shooting all the platform sections on this level will give you a shield.

STAGE 5-15
Get up the ladder and treat this like a normal level. The first power up is always a vulcan missile which is OK if you can finish the whole level before any of the small balls manage to make their way under the platform, but if you get stuck down there with them you will need a wire at least, and a power wire at best.

Funnily enough, shooting all the platforms on this level gives you a power wire – Yipee!

STAGE7-19
In frozen Leningrad the ground is covered with ice, making changes of direction a haphazard affair. Work from the centre to the left or right destroying everything as you go, then backtrack and repeat this pattern until the level is clear.

STAGE 7-20
This stage has two levels and it is best to clear up the lower one before taking on the upper. Go immediately to whichever side you prefer, and as the large ball bounces back from the wall go under it, split it and all the smaller ones, then collect the power ups. Using these it should be a simple matter to finish the stage.

STAGE 8-22
Splitting all three balls at once will lead to disaster f'sure. So take them one at a time. The other two will stay out of your way, and soon you will be given a power wire and a twin wire to clean up with.

STAGE 9-26
Shoot all the platform sections on this level to get a power wire.

STAGE 9-27
At the start of this level you are in a hollow: run left and fire and a power-up will drop on you. Shoot some more and another will drop just to your left. Go up the ladder and run off the left end of the platform to pick up the power up. Now you are out of the middle, stay out.

Continued on Page 212

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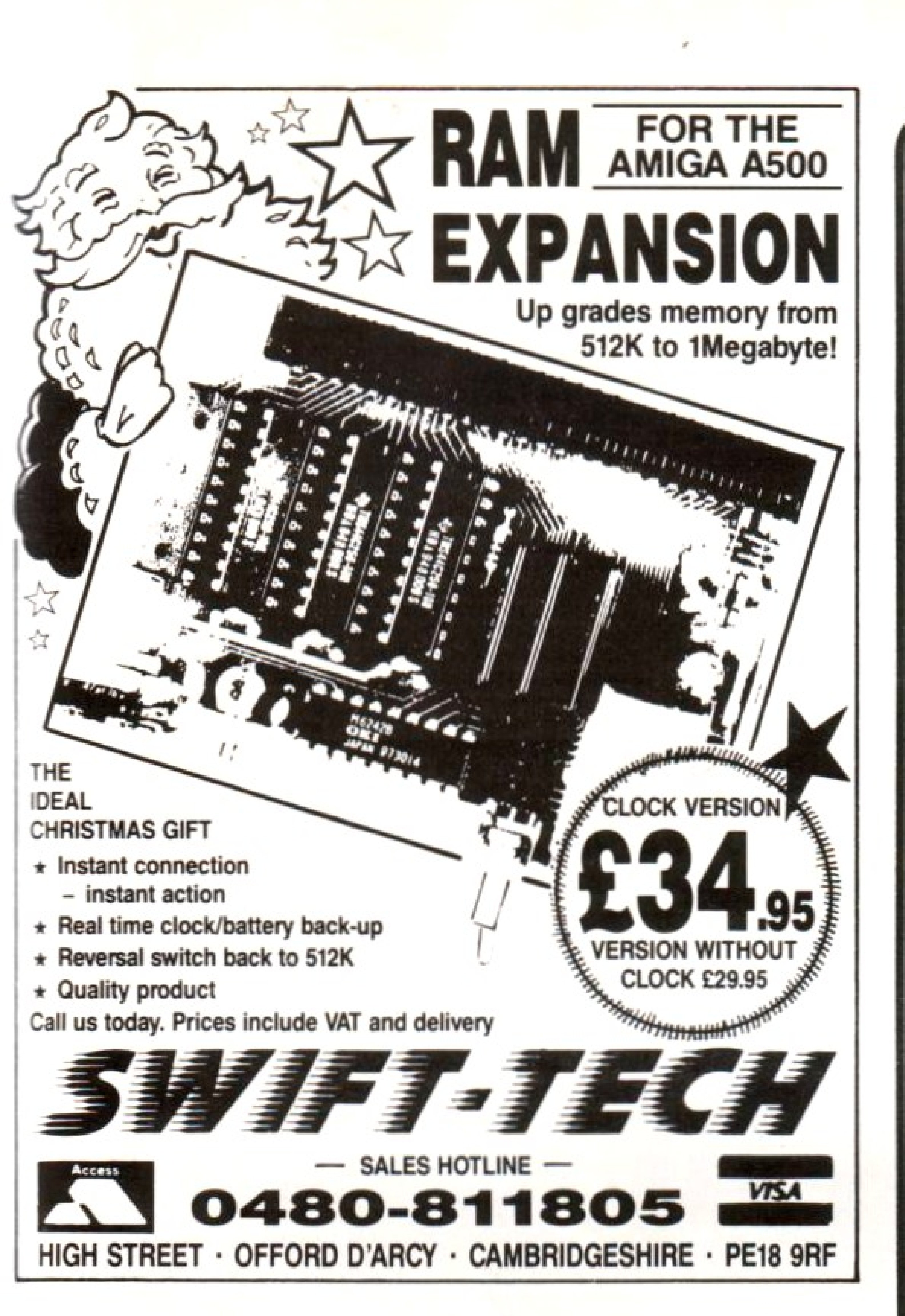
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STAGE 10-28
Again, a trapped ball cannot be released if you have the vulcan missile. Shoot the third platform from the left as soon as possible, so that the bonus pick-up drops all the way to the ground.

STAGE 10-29
Very difficult to complete without a power-up, and power-ups are not easy to collect. So shoot the large ball when it is directly above the gap in the platform and the power-ups will fall directly onto you.

STAGE 11-31
The floor is uneven, making it impossible to collect some of the power-ups, so don't count on them. There are also some very bizarre bounces, so look out.

STAGE 11-32
Yet another level where there is a trapped ball which you can't free with the vulcan missile. Shooting the platforms on the right is the only way to collect the bonus pick-up. Shoot them all to get a freeze.

STAGE 11-33
Guess what? If you have the vulcan missile you can't finish this level - *quelle surprise!* Go left, up the ladder, go right, go up the ladder, go right off the end of the platform, and *voila* – you are in a position to do some damage to the two balls at the top right. Now go up the long ladder at the right, go left and up the next ladder, go left and up the short ladder, run off the left-hand side of this ladder and you can get the last ball to finish.

STAGE 12-35
When you have destroyed all the other balls and there is just one left, go up the ladder at the left and walk over the last ball. As you fall off the right-hand side, go left and you will land on the platform below it. From here you can finish.

STAGE 13-37
As soon as the level starts go right and get the three small balls that fall down to make life a lot simpler.

STAGE 14-41
This deceptive level has the nasty habit of placing two balls one behind the other, so as you hit one the other just keeps coming.

STAGE 14-42
Very difficult level, but shooting all two of the platforms gives a freeze.

STAGE 15-43
Half of this level is icy, so beware. Shoot all the platform sections and you get a freeze.

STAGE 15-45
Shooting all the platforms gives a vulcan missile. Wow!

These should help you on your way to Easter Island, where you can enjoy a jeep ride into the Pacific sunset.

SHADOW WARRIORS

If you're swinging around the lamposts trying to kick the baddies on this arcade conversion, but all to no avail, then try this cheat for size.

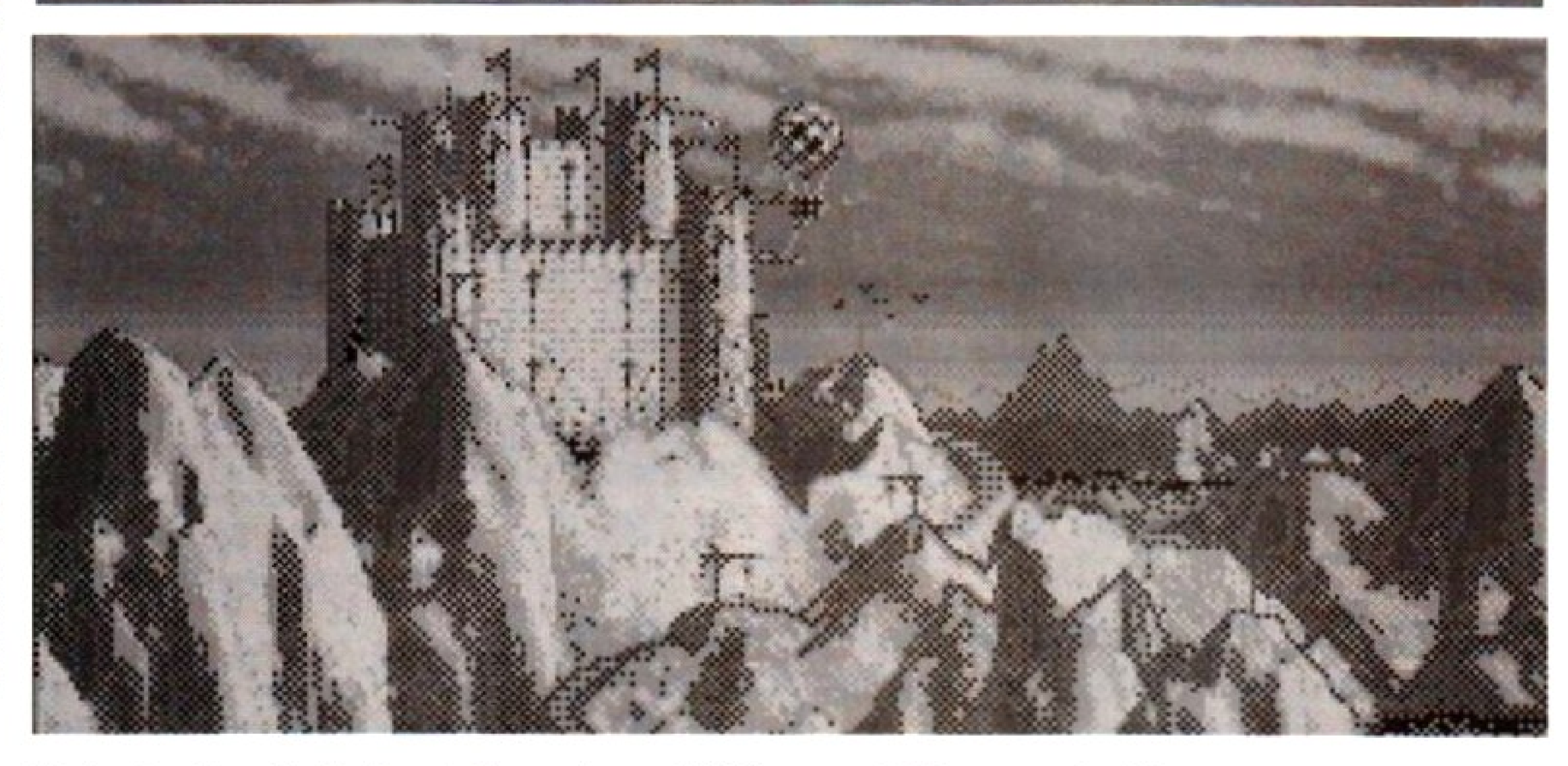
While the intro sequence is running hold down these keys: (, Ctrl, J, Esc, 5, F2, Right Alt, V, Enter (not Return) and Help. The border should flash purple to tell you that the cheat is active. Now you can press 1 and 2 to give both players extra energy, press Help to skip levels and Q to make the warriors invincible.

No particular credit goes out for this cheat, because it's one of those that has been sent in by a whole host of readers. Thanks anyway, though!



Shadow Warriors: An unusual amount of different moves for a beat-em-up, but swinging around on the lamp-posts won't do you lot of good unless you are particularly skilled. Try the cheat!

DRAGON'S BREATH



Having trouble with this Pern-influenced game? Well, take a look at these hints and see if they can help you out at all.

MONTH ONE

Start by casting the following spell on your dragon:

2 * Rasgon, grind and heat.
2 * Churl, normal and heat.
3 * Arolig, normal and heat – one quarter condense.
2 * Mionacal, grind and condense.
7 * Haloras, cut and condense.
7 * Igele, normal and heat.
2 * Churl, normal and heat.

This spell makes your dragon virtually indestructible by rising all its characteristics up to, or very close to, full. Your dragon will therefore be unbeatable in a duel with another dragon.

Go to the map and select a town with a population of 1,000 or more (Olorn is a good one). Ignore the training missions (they're just a waste of time) and set your dragon on medium zeal. Now go for a 'conquer and keep' mission then go to the Castle Screen. Go to the incubation room and put two eggs on full heat, then go to the library and record the ongoing battles. Don't buy any goods from the trader yet!

MONTH TWO

Go to the Map Screen and go to the captured town. When the picture of the town appears click on the magic symbol and when in the magic room cast the following spell:

3 * Tius, normal and heat.
4 * Churl, normal and heat.
2 * Arcus, grind and condense.
1 * Churl, normal and heat.

This spell will increase the population of the town and may even turn it into a city. Go back to the city and set the taxes high, then check in the library to see if your dragon is guarding a piece of the talisman. If he is, note the name of the town or city and end your turn.

SUBSEQUENT MONTHS

Leave your city or town and it should keep on growing, then start to produce new villages (these will be yours). Look in the library to check if any towns are fighting your town or city and if so send your dragon on a raid to wipe them out.

Buy ingredients from the traders if you can afford them (especially Churl, which should be bought in large quantities).

Carry on conquering towns and villages and casting the 'population' spell (from Month Two, above).

When you have more than one dragon, cast the 'dragon' spell (from Month One, above) on the new ones. When you have enough dragons, constantly guard any talisman pieces you find. If you have enough, guard them with your 'super' dragons, who lose virtually no health while carrying out the task.

Attack villages, towns and cities that are under enemy control as this deprives them of taxes.

Use the 'super' dragons with low or medium zeal when on conquering missions, because if high zeal is used, they will usually just wipe out most towns.

Michael Garvey,
West Bergholt, Colchester

FIGHTER BOMBER

If those missions that only give you half a tank of fuel to begin with are proving a little too difficult, then try this:

Start your take-off as usual and get a few feet off the ground, then land, making sure that you have enough room to take off again. Now all you have to do is click on the REARM AND REFUEL box to fill up the fuel tank, thus saving you the hassle of refueling in mid-air. Now all you have to do is take off in the little bit of runway space you've got left. Watch that tree!

JR Beck, Scarborough, North Yorkshire

BACK TO THE FUTURE II

Some of you may be thinking of getting a nice new Amiga for Christmas. If so you'll no doubt be getting this licence of the hit film bundled with your machine. The going is pretty tough though, so a little cheat may be in order.

Just pause the game and type THE ONLY NEAT THING TO DO (including spaces) and you will now have an infinite supply of Michael J Foxes. Ooh, that'll have Fox fans drooling all over the place, no doubt. Can't see the appeal meself!

Jules Glasspool, Lymington, Hampshire

KID GLOVES

Travelling through time can be a bit tricky, especially when you're only a little feller! Never mind, here's a little bit of help.

First, start up the game and press F1 to pause. Now type RHIANNON and the game will start. All you have to do now is press F9 to become invincible. Makes the going a lot easier, don't you think? If you want some extra goodies, then press F1 and type the cheat again, then press F8 to be blessed with nine keys, nine magic spells and $10,000 cash.

Still not enough? Then try pausing, typing the cheat then pressing F6 – you will magically appear in the shop.

What! You want even more? Oh, all right! Pause and put the cheat in (yes, again!) and press F7 and you'll skip to the next level.

Gavin Briggs, Crawley

Continues on Page 217 ▸




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Tired of finishing at the back of the pack? Got your foot to the floor and still being passed like a 2CV at Le Mans? Then you need help setting up your car so that it can go faster than 240mph and do a qualifying lap at an average of over 235mph.

The following set-up information is for the Penske Chevrolet, but the other two cars are very similar, except for needing a much lower gear ratio on the Lola Buick.

FUEL



For qualifying you will need 10 gallons because, when set up right, the car burns fuel very fast and five gallons will run out on the back straight of the fourth lap. For the race you'll obviously need a full tank (10 and 30 lap races are for wimps).

WINGS



For qualifying put the rear wing on its top notch and the front one a notch lower to minimise drag. This does make the car harder to steer and demands a good line into the bends, but it maximises speed on the straights. In a full race take both wings down by 3-5 notches and keep the front wing one notch below the rear - that should give you enough control, even with a full tank of gas.

RUBBER



Soft tyres on the left and mediums on the right are the order of the day for qualifying, but in a race you may want to switch to a harder compound on both. If you put mediums on the left and hards on the right you won't have to bother with many tyre changes in a long race.

STAGGER



No messing here, just whack it up to maximum stagger, +1.00, for both qualifying and the race.

PRESSURES



Despite the instructions, my experience is that pressures between 24-28 are the best for both qualifying and the race, but it's hard to identify much difference as the most important effect is on the amount of wear in the long term. Over 28 gets you more speed but it's very hard to steer and below 24 starts losing speed on the straights and the turns.

SHOCKS



The instructions are spot on here: "set the shocks as stiff as you can control." Personally I have all four of them two notches off the bottom. However, the advice to set the rear shocks softer to lose less speed in the turns is dodgy because if you do have to steer hard in a turn you can get a sudden drop-off in speed.

CAMBERS



The initial set-up is fine and keeps all four tyres even on the track - I've been unable to find any improvements, but let us know if you can.

GEARS



Set the gear ratio to 10.00 (or a bit either way) but on the Lola Buick make sure it's about two points lower or the engine blows.

ANTI-ROLL BARS

Put the front anti-roll bar to maximum stiffness and the rear one a couple of notches stiffer, but not to maximum.

TURBOCHARGER

Set to nine - nothing else will do. It burns up the gas like the space shuttle, but you do want to win, don't you? Possibly worth turning down when you get a decent lead in the race so that you can save fuel.

YELLOW FLAGS

When driving under yellow put the cruise control on and get the car over to the left of the track, then leave it to its own devices! At 90mph it will make its own way round the track and you just have to watch out for the crashed cars. Obviously this is very dangerous if you're in the middle of the pack and not out front.

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

- Use the mouse for control if you can, it's the easiest way to get a driving rhythm going.

- Set the scenery detail to low so that the screen update is as fast as possible and there is little graphic detail to distract and confuse the eye as possible.

- Keep the mouse sensitivity at medium because high tends to lead to oversteer.

- Be very careful on the first few turns after a pit stop or after a yellow flag, because your tyres will be cold and you'll find yourself sliding out into the wall and wondering where your grip went. The increased fuel tank load after a pit stop also accentuates the difficulty of steering, so watch out after pit stops for cars approaching at speed from behind.

TARGETS

The following speeds should be possible with the set-up outlined here, so now all you have to do is avoid crashing for 200 laps.

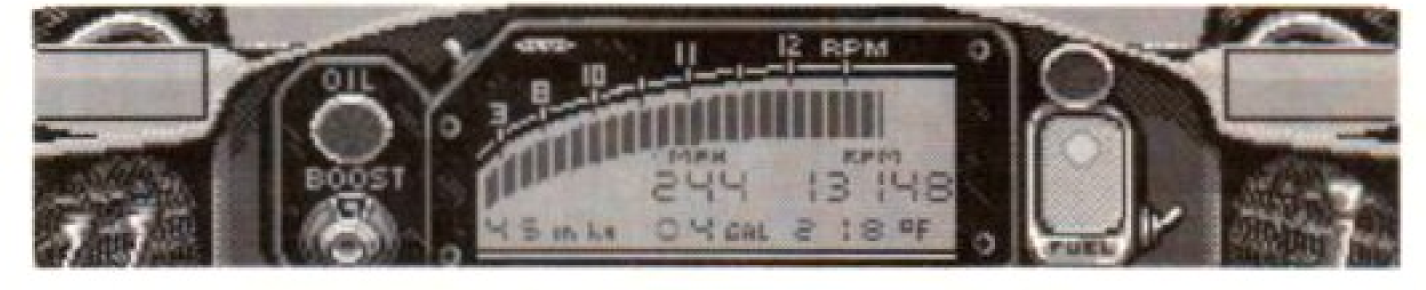
One qualifying lap over 235mph.



A qualifying average over 233mph.



Hit 244mph on the main straight while qualifying.



WINNERS BOX

Only two winners this month, since everyone seems to be intent on sending in page after page of *Shadow of the Beast II* solutions. Sorry, but we printed it last month! Still, the lucky winners of the £50 vouchers this month are Michael Garvey for his *Dragon's Breath* tips and Graham Golden for the *Demon's Tomb* maps. If you want a slice of the moolah (or a voucher, at least) just get your tips into GAMEBUSTERS, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

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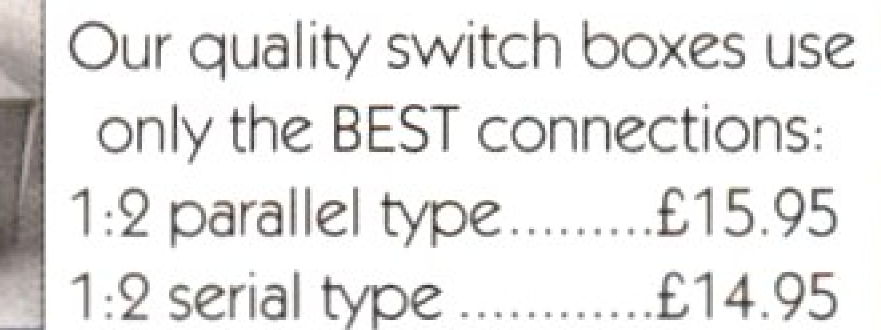
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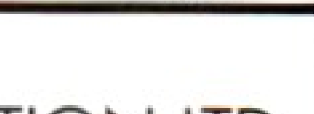
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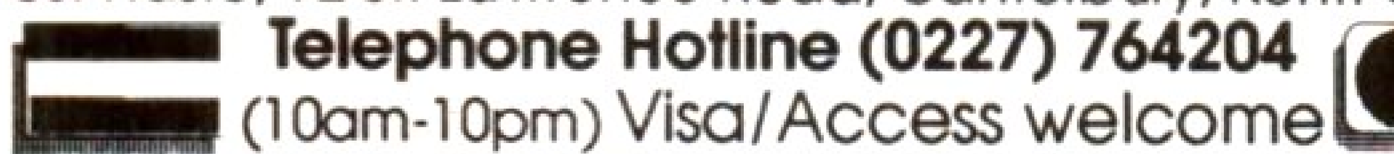
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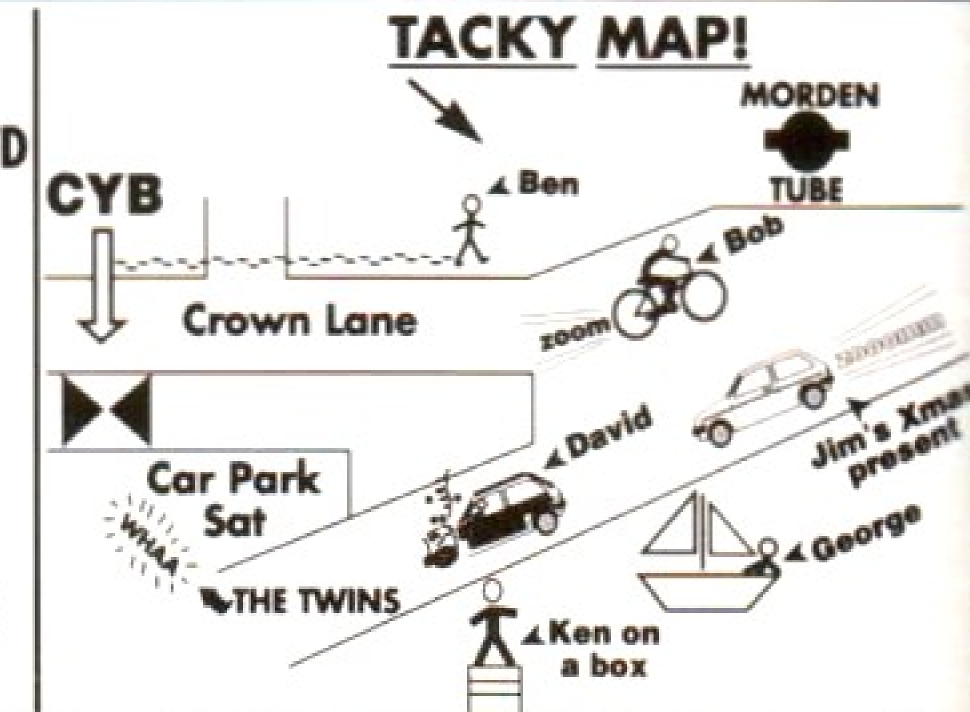
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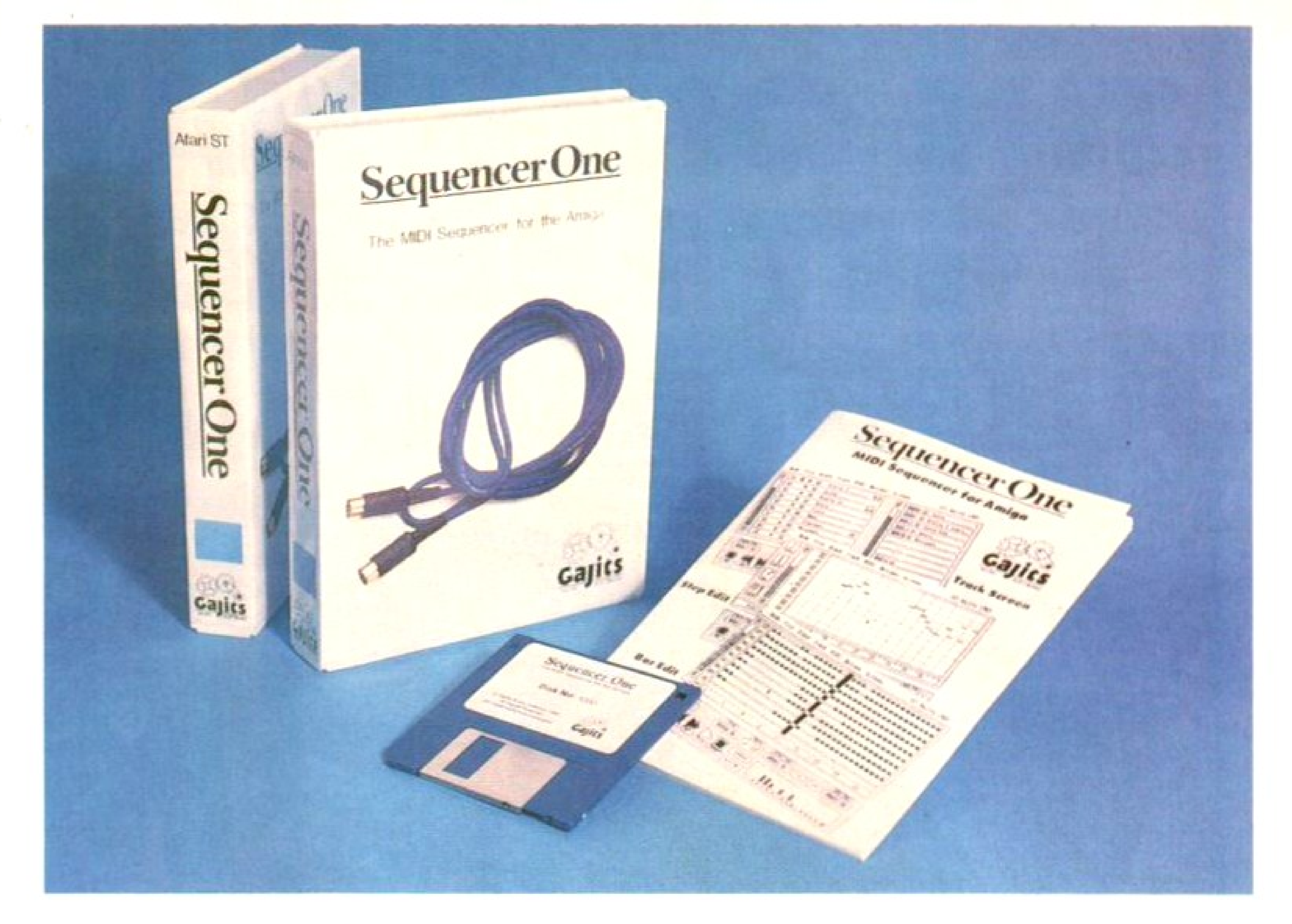
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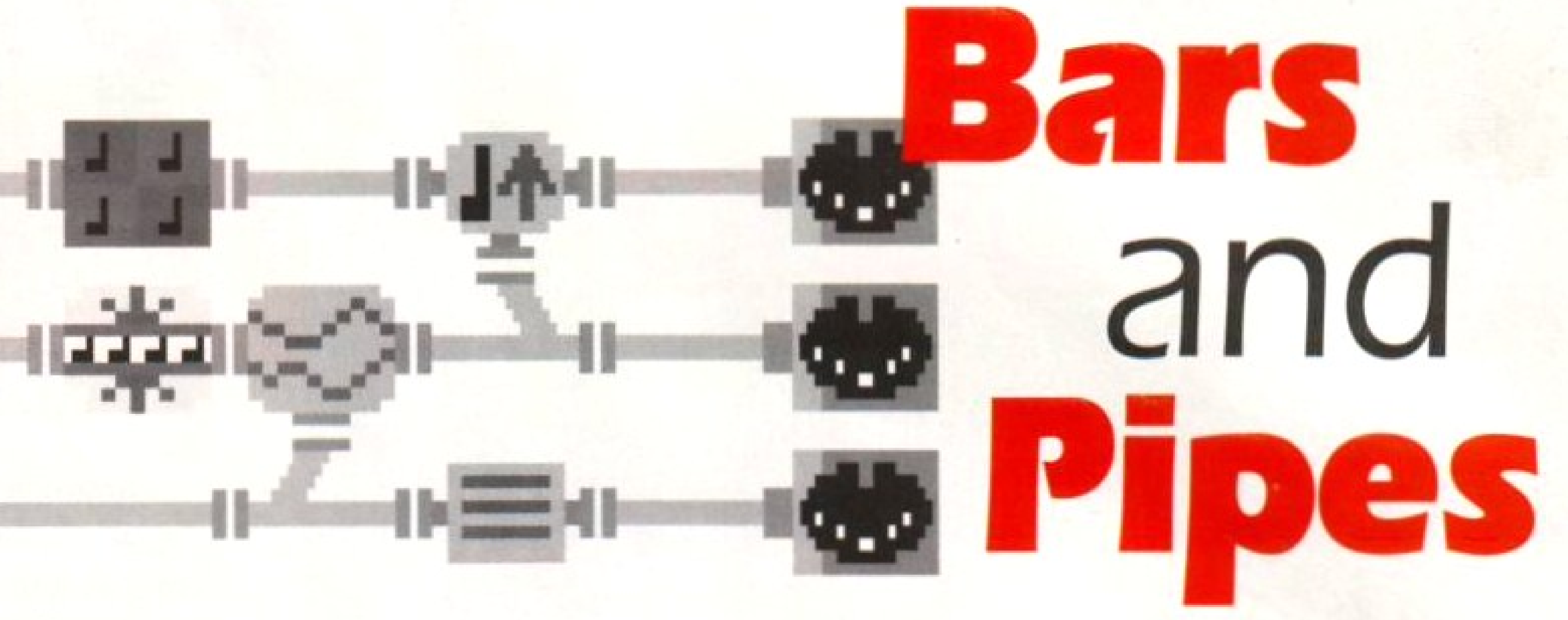
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Plumbing the Depths of Bars and Pipes

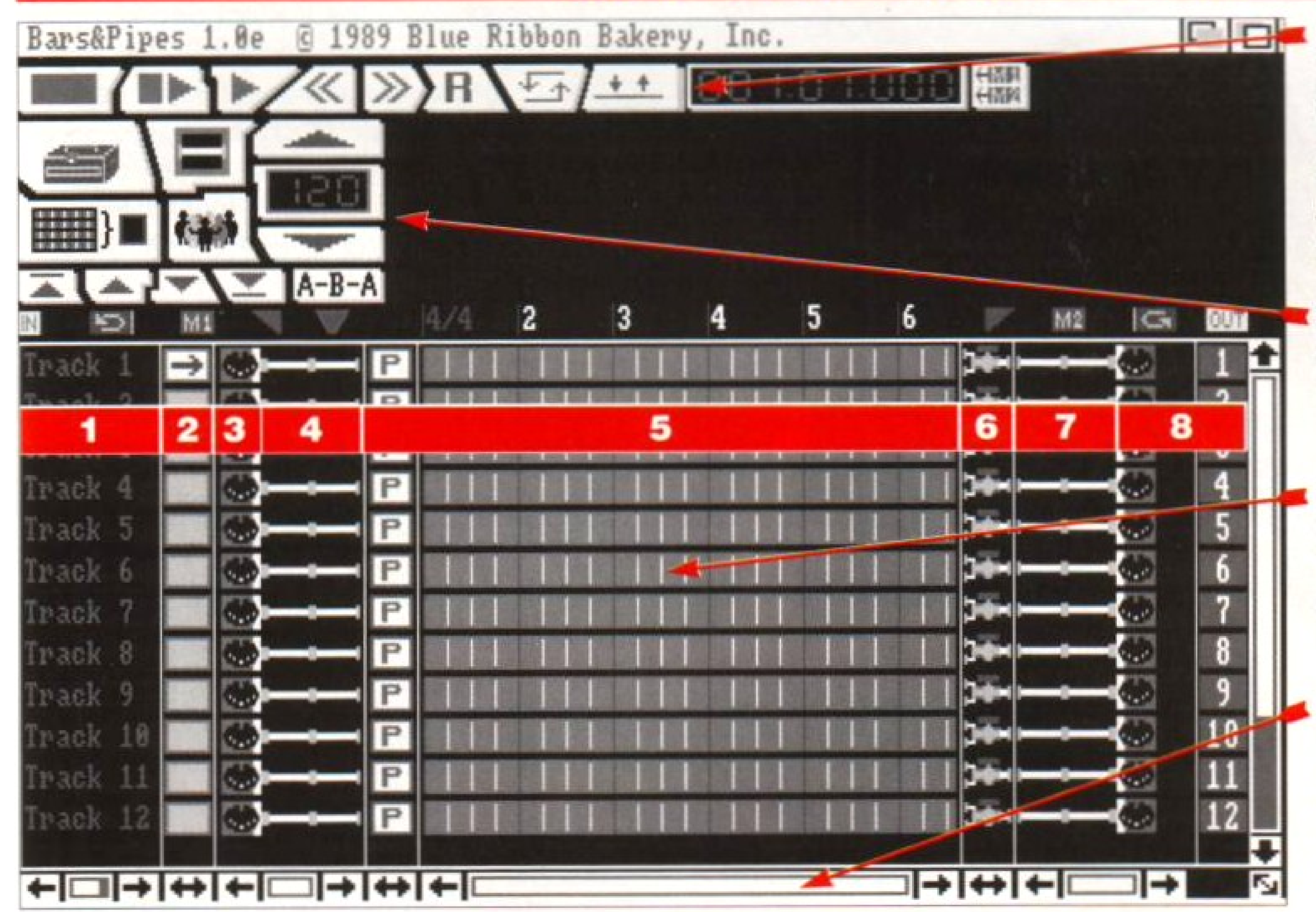


Back in July, while I was frantically putting the finishing touches to the free music cassette for Issue 12, m'learned mate Maff Evans reviewed the American *Bars and Pipes* MIDI sequencing program. We feel that this unique program deserves a tutorial because there is such a lot that you can do with the program.

First of all, it is designed in such a way that the novice can take advantage of the power of technology without getting tied up in the notes and numbers that many packages force you to understand. Secondly, it has what it modestly calls 'tools.' These are, in fact, very clever, very simple and extremely creative routines which you can use without any recourse to the MIDI handbook and without writing in to *Amiga Format* with tales of premature baldness.

Bars and Pipes is an unusual sequencing system, likening music to the flow of water through a pipe. Thinking of buying it? Having problems with its odd approach? A tutorial from **JON BATES** should help.

Basics: The Main Screen



Bars and Pipes uses a novel way of presenting the tracks it records. If you have a quick peek at the main screen you will see it has the familiar 'tape transport' controls across the top: record, play, return to zero, fast forward and rewind and counter.

Underneath that, to the left, is a set of colourful icons – mind you, everything in *Bars and Pipes* is colourful – which bring up specific functions.

The lower part of the screen is taken up with the routing that your music will take through the program. It's very easy to follow, giving you an immediate picture of what you are doing.

Across the bottom of the screen is a series of arrows and drag bars that enable you to reconfigure the screen to accommodate however many branches and detours you want the data to take.

1 **The track is numbered and named in the left-hand list.**

2 **The grey block to its immediate right registers the status, as in 'Is this the one you are recording on right now?' The red arrow is active.**

3 **Next we get our first icon – the 'MIDI In' port. Without this you can't use the track to record on. All the sound-processing icons to affect the input are added into this part of the screen by dragging them from the toolbox (over the page). They are removed simply by clicking on them with the cursor and hitting Delete. So you can delete the 'MIDI In' port, to prevent recording on that track. This makes a rather neat way of safeguarding any track – remove the port and you can't record on it.**

4 **Following the flow of the music from left to right of the screen, the MIDI port is followed by interconnecting pipes. *Bars and Pipes* represents the flow of music as akin to the flow of water through pipes. As you will soon see, branches can be taken from the pipeline and fed into another track. Sometimes an elbow joint is required to divert the flow, sometimes the flow needs to be merged.**

5 **The 'P' column stands for Play and turns to 'R' when recording is required. The grey block after it is a minature representation of the music recorded – notes can be seen inside it and any used block turns a lighter grey. The numbers across the top of this column refer to bar numbers.**

6 **To the right of this is a tap (also known as a 'faucet' in the Americanese of the manual). There are, in fact, three taps in three colours. The blue is a merge tap that lets you play over the top of existing recorded material on that track. The yellow only allows playback on that track. The red tap disconnects that track (mute) and graphically disconnects the pipeline. These colours are also imitated by the notes seen in the central grey section**

7 **Following this are a series of pipes and ports similar to those seen on the far left and numbered 3 here. This, again, is the place where tools can be put into position and tracks merged and information passed around.**

8 **The final stage, on the extreme right-hand end of the row, is the 'MIDI Out' icon, without which no sound can come out. The MIDI channel for output is represented by the number to the far right of the track.**



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Easily loop sections of a sound. You can even adjust the looping section while the sound plays.

The sound you are currently editing is graphed here. You can easily mark sections to edit by dragging your mouse over the graph.

Common tools such as delete, paste, and insert are available by clicking on buttons. Other tools are available via menus.

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bang
Welcome
Button
flute

Length: 12764 samples
Play speed: 9859 samp/sec
Start mark: 7770
End mark: 7855
Insert mark: none
Memory: 1431 K

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Activate the toolbox by clicking on the red box icon to the left of the tempo counter. This will open another brightly-coloured window, divided up into squares – each square is a tool. Simply drag the tool down and insert it into the pipeline, either before or after the recording section. As you click on a tool the name of it appears on the top command line of the screen – which is useful, as the tiny icons can be confusing.

Why Tools are Good News

Although *Bars and Pipes* is by no means an insignificant sequencer, I feel that its greatest strength is lent to it by the tools it uses to process the MIDI data. The sequencing side is reasonable, although the editing is somewhat tedious and could be smartened up a little. On the plus side, though, it does earn bonus points for displaying lots of MIDI data and allowing you to graphically edit many of the sound peripherals – volume, program changes, velocity curves, pitch bend – and even put in your own lyrics.

Never mind. What makes *Bars and Pipes* unique is its toolbox. This is the easiest area for a beginner to get to grips with, to really feel that the Amiga is applying some kind of Artificial Intelligence to the musical data it is receiving...

The first thing to be aware of is that you can put the tools either before or after the recording buffer. Running the program on an A500 with a half meg memory expansion, you don't have a lot of room left for recording data – so with this in mind, the positioning of the tools is actually quite vital.

Let's run through some and see how you can best make use of them. I have deliberately kept it musically simple with the one-finger keyboard merchants in mind. Try the following.

ECHO

This amazing feature will repeat any note you play any number of times with any interval of time you specify. The time between each repeat is marked off in bars and beats so that



you can time it to fit the tempo of a piece: if you alter the speed of the piece the speed of the echoes is also altered to match.

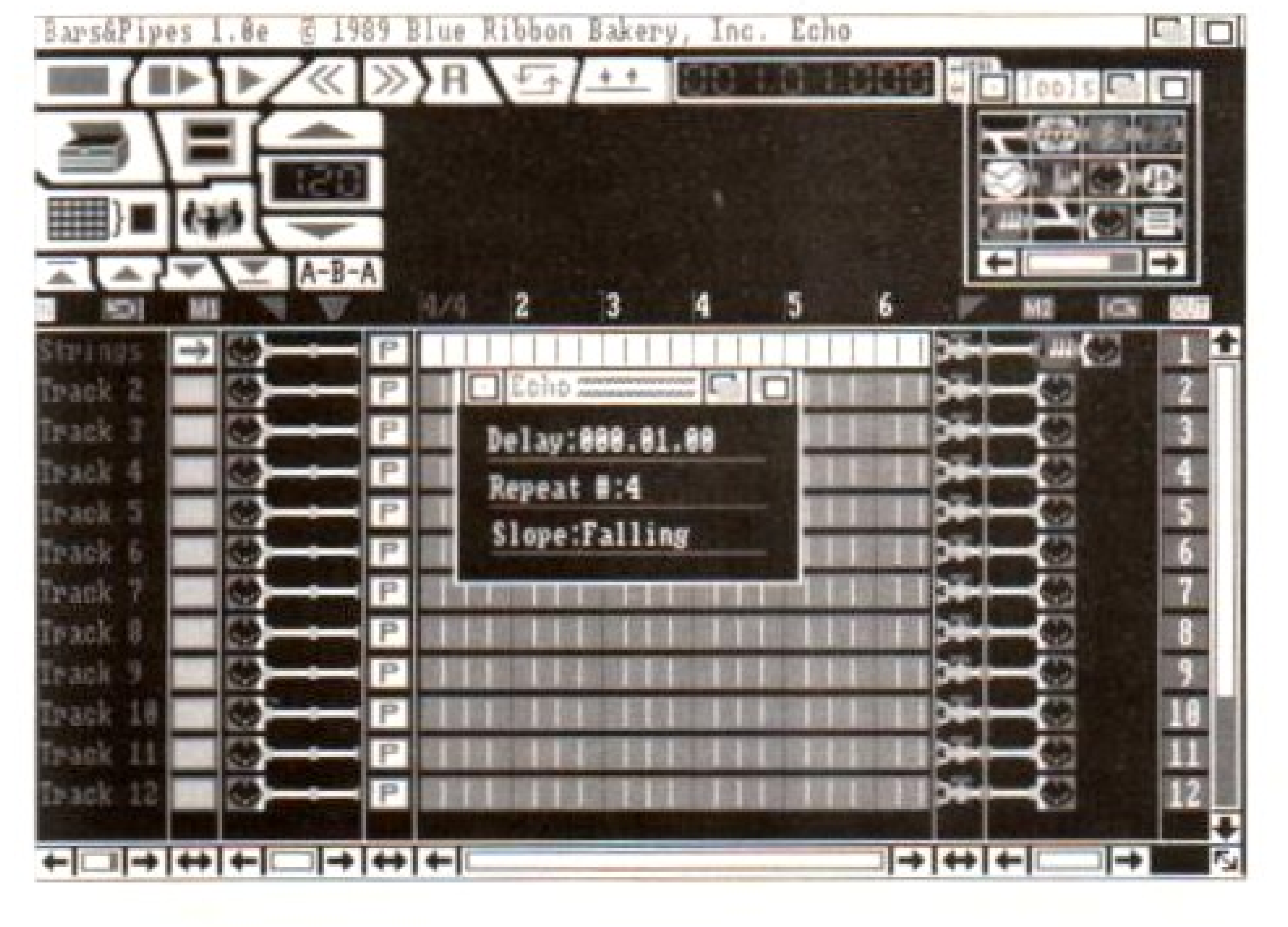
There are three sorts of echo: Rising, where the repeats get stronger; Level, in which they stay the same intensity as you played; and Falling, which is the most normal bcause the echoes fade away.

The start level is fixed by you, depending on how hard or soft you hit the note. What the manual doesn't make clear is that this works not on MIDI volume levels, but on velocity levels. If you are using a voice or synth where there is no response to velocity (that is, how hard you hit the keys) then this feature won't work.

Get a responsive voice, say strings, and drag the purple echo icon, placing it post recording. If you place it before then all the extra notes generated will be recorded and take up loads of precious memory. To get at the controls for any icon simply double-click when it is in place.

ABOVE: Wildly repeating echo set up very simply by two echo tools set in series in the pipeline with different settings.

BELOW: The purple echo tool is placed on the right-hand pipeline. It is set to 4 repeats at a quarter note's distance from each other and the effect will die away thanks to the Falling setting.



Record a track with very few notes, spaced fairly evenly. The more echo repeats you use, the more 'spacey' the effect is. You can get an idiotic number of repeats, but if you go over the top (like putting in 999 repeats) the program sulks and refuses to play. Numbers around the 70 mark are quite acceptable as long as you don't set up too long a repeat time – you could sit there all day waiting for it too finish.

Advanced lunacy sets in if you combine two echo tools, one after another. Setting the first echo to eight repeats and then the second to four with different time gaps gives out one hell of an effect.

The good point is that to do this with a dedicated echo unit would set you back several hundred quid. This way it can be applied to each individual track regardless and set up individually for each sound – something you could do for less than several thousand quid only if you used multiple echo units.

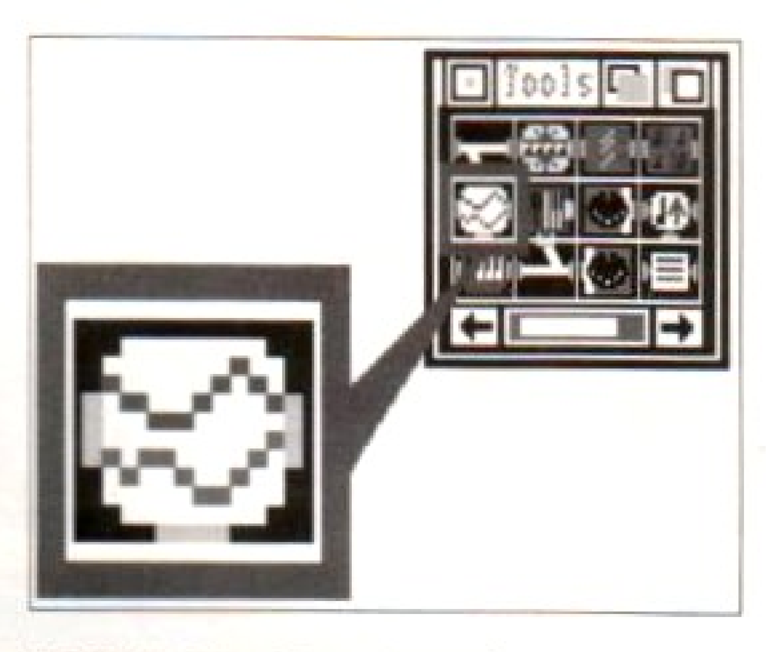
If, however, you get too greedy and set up a whole load of effects you will find that two things happen. The program can't cope and starts spluttering out notes and your synth will very rapidly reach the maximum number of notes it is capable of playing in one go.

Echo is a simple but incredibly effective function that gets a lot of mileage from very few notes. Hello, Pink Floyd! Hello, Phillip Glass!

COUNTERPOINT

This little tool hides behind a white hamburger-like icon with wavy lines. It actually responds to the notes you input by playing what is in effect a counter melody along with your notes. How does it do this?

Well, if you so wish you can dive into the toolbox and set it up to match the key and type of scale you are going to be using. If, like the rest of the dabblers, you are content to play away in the very standard key of C without using anything except the white notes, then fortunately the program defaults to work in this very manner. Simple enough.



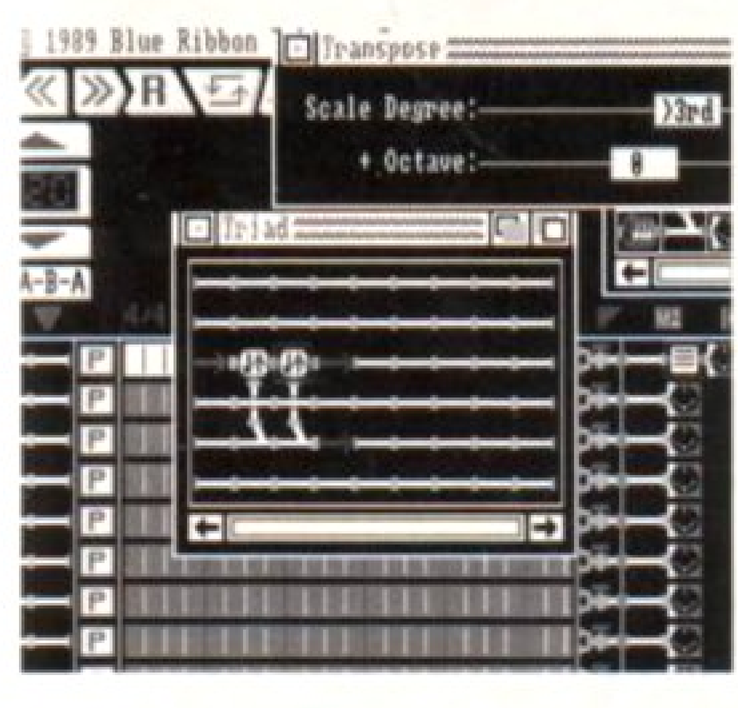
ABOVE: The Counterpoint tool is the rather peculiar thing that looks like some weird kind of hamburger, featuring blue and red wavy lines on a white oval shape. It gives you complementary melodies – instant composition!

Set up with orchestral sound and play or record a very simple sequence of single white notes. If you like you can now dive into the editing side and copy it forwards with repeats. You will find that every time it comes round it has a different set of accompanying notes with it, which makes for instant and convincing harmony!

If you wish, you can alter the mode of scale – and hence the harmony – from within the song editor window, as applied to the notes in that track.

TRIAD

As the name implies, this particular tool generates three notes from your one note: but they are at fixed intervals from your original note. Like Counterpoint, the notes it plays are fixed into a programmable mode and so various musical idioms can be created. By double-clicking on the icon, you get to alter the two harmony notes. If you think simple when using this effect it is quite stunning, especially when you alter the intervals and create new and novel harmonies.

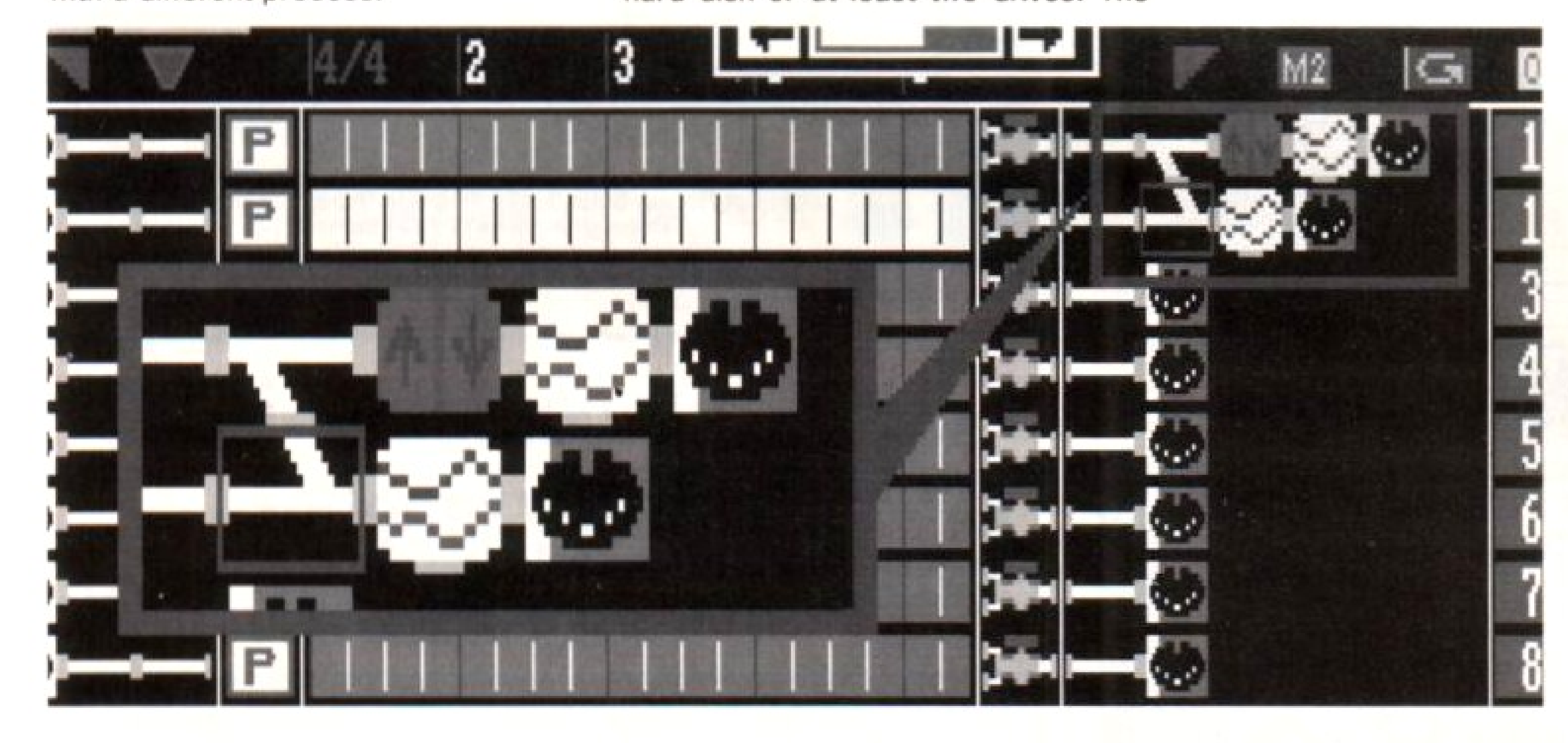


Triad is a complex tool that not only adds harmony notes but allows you to set up the scales and intervals.

OTHER TRICKS

A couple of other tools deserve a mention here. There is the Flipper, which effectively reverses the keyboard so that the top notes are to the left and low to the right.

There are also various connecting pipes and diverting features so that sound can be fed from one track into another – hence becoming a different sound, possibly, or the same sound with a different process.



You can also feed sound data directly into another channel. This can produce some amazing effects. For example, I took the Flipper (blue hamburger with red filling!), and fed that into the Counterpoint and out. However I also branched off and fed the straight non-inverted data into the next track, still with the string sound, and fed that through the Counterpoint. The result is an extremely rich and complex harmony generated by playing only a few notes. If you like this idea you can create it as a Macro Tool and not only name and store it but even design your own icon.

These are just a few ideas to get you going. Other tools include the inevitable Quantize, with its multiple functions, and some clever articulation tools to help shape phrases dynamically.

Toolizing

When using tools that correct errors or add dynamics, once you are happy with their effect it is best to 'toolize' the track, as the manual puts it. This fixes the data permanently and you can save on memory space by dispensing with the tool.

Memory Economy

Although *Bars and Pipes* runs with one meg of memory it is probably happier with about two meg and a hard disk or at least two drives. The tools work in real time and other than ones that generate piles of extra data, like echo, it is probably worth while doing this once you are sure it is the effect you want. This applies particularly to Quantize; once you have it right, then get rid of the tool. If you have place Quantize on the input side, you will have recorded it in time anyway and so you can happily dispense with the tool immediately.

ABOVE: Things can get very interesting when you branch off one track and into another and treat them to multiple effects like note flipping and counterpoint all at the same time.

Inversion

Lastly try the Inverter on chords. You can play one section normally, copy it forward to a separate track and put the Inverter on the new track. This makes for some really interesting second and third appearances of either the verse or chorus of a song.

Tool Power

For the complete beginner, these tools are extremely well thought out, adding a creative force that makes this program stand out from the rest of the bunch.

Good News

The good news is that there are loads more tools and goodies now available. The *Internal Sounds Kit* dispenses with MIDI and gives you a whole host of samples, editing facilities, sound allocations and the ability to input notes from either the qwerty keys or mouse.

Music Box A has no less than 18 new tools from trills and glissandi to MIDI monitors, compressors, stereo simulators and new accompaniment features. *Music Box B* has 20 more tools to make it possible for simultaneous control of over 80 MIDI channels, track alternator, control of Fostex R8 multi-track, automated volume and pan control – etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

Programmers can get to grips with creating their own specialist tools using the perkily-named *Rules for Tools* program – and there is also a multimedia add-on that will co-ordinate *Bars and Pipes* with other programs on a two-way basis – programs like *Performer, Amiga-Vision, Showmaker, Deluxe Video and Digi-Paint III.*

Latest Releases

The version of *Bars and Pipes* we have is 1.0e but the latest, version 1.0f, should be reaching our shores about now. The developers, Blue Riband Bakery Inc, are about to launch a professional version with notation, systems-exclusive dumps, event editing and general improvements all round – our version can get constipated if you ask it to do several things all at once and I am assured this has been fixed. Maybe a *Junior* version is on the cards too. At present there is no official distributor in the UK but the program is readily available from several outlets.

BARS AND PIPES
£219.95 ■ 1MByte and MIDI Interface required ■
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LEFT: Create your own combination of music tools to recall at any time.

Like a Chameleon changes its colours, the Amiga can change its operating system to be an Atari ST. **RICHARD MONTEIRO** examines a new ST emulator.

Chameleon

Atari ST Emulator ■ £30 approx (DM99) ■ Maxon Computer, Germany

After hearing of German company Macro System's Atari ST emulator Medusa, reviewed in Issue 16, another German firm decided that more was possible for less. Maxon's *Chameleon* does almost exactly the same job as Medusa, but requires no hardware widget to be stuck inside your Amiga and costs a fifth of the price.

Chameleon is easy enough to run. Simply insert the emulator disk at the Workbench prompt screen and wait for a message requesting an ST disk containing the ST operating system to be inserted into the drive.

If, on selecting the mode, you have an ST disk in the Amiga drive, the ST's Desktop will appear almost instantaneously. If, however, there is no disk in the drive, the Desktop takes some 20 seconds to appear. This is the most crucial stage – having the wrong ST disk in the drive can cause *Chameleon* to crash.

Soft Options

You've now got an ST instead of an Amiga – what next? You can run a wealth of well-behaved GEM ST software. It seems *Chameleon's* brief was simply to ensure things like *Calamus*, *TechnoCAD* and *Signum* would work correctly. Which they do. Of course many other titles do too, but equally there are many that don't.

You'll never get games to work under the emulator. Programs which bypass GEM calls and hit the hardware direct will also fall over. As for things that require a dongle inserted into what should be the ST's cartridge port – forget it!

The last point is important because it means much MIDI software, which is dongle protected, simply won't work. Talking of MIDI; even if there is no dongle, a lot of quality MIDI software won't work. MIDI requires exact timing – the ST runs at 8Mhz while a standard Amiga only ticks over at 7.24MHz. It might not sound like a massive difference, but it's enough to cause problems.

Like Medusa, *Chameleon* requires the Atari ST's operating system (known simply as TOS, wittily meaning The Operating System) to be supplied on disk. Unfortunately there is no simple way of acquiring TOS. Medusa comes with a utility for dumping the Atari operating system to disk: a highly illegal way of doing things, but one which doesn't require much effort from you, bar finding an ST.

No such ROM-ripping utility comes with Maxon's emulator. In fact, short of acquiring Medusa's TOS extractor, there's only one way you can go about getting TOS. And that's by knocking on the door of an Atari dealer and purchasing TOS version 1.0, 1.2 or 1.4 on disk. TOS on disk will cost you upwards of £30 depending on the version and the source.

Resolutions

Assuming you manage to get TOS on disk, *Chameleon* will come to life. You'll be give three options: F1 for low resolution (320 x 200, 16 colours); F2 for medium resolution (640 x 200, four colours); F3 for high resolution (640 x 400, monochrome). Pressing the right key will reboot the Amiga into the selected ST mode.

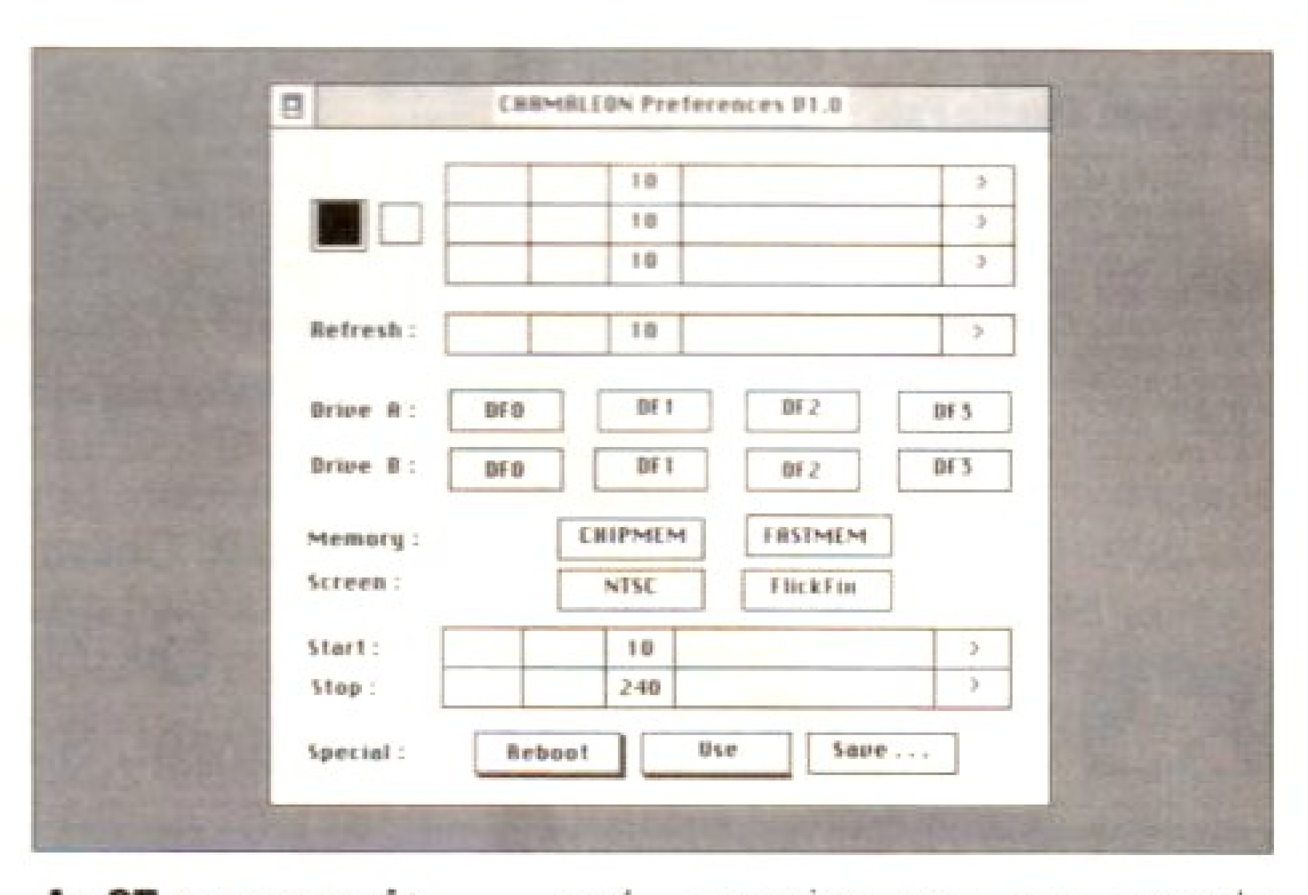
Headaches

In its current form, *Chameleon* is far from ideal. TOS is the biggest headache. Not only is it problematic getting hold of TOS in the required form, but the review copy of *Chameleon* only worked with German revisions of TOS. Other minus points include lack of hard disk support, needing a Meg to do anything exciting and non-compatibility with the A3000 or any machine that has a processor or accelerator other than a 68000.

Maxon has made assurances that all these points are currently being addressed. *Chameleon II* will sport hard disk and '020/'030 support. There will also be a hardware option which fits into the Amiga's floppy port. You will be able to plug ST ROMs into it directly. The only trouble is that TOS on ROM costs even more than TOS on disk. £70 is typical.

Niggles aside, *Chameleon* does what it claims. It emulates the ST well and, assuming you run properly-written GEM software, programs execute without a hitch.

The price quoted is for the German version, available from Maxon at Schwalbacher Straße 52, D-6236 Eschborn, Germany. George Thompson Services on 077082 234 will probably be handling *Chameleon* some time this year, but the price is likely to rise to £49.95.



An ST accessory is supplied with *Chameleon* which enables you to change screen colours, change the refresh rate, determine which drives (that is, DF0:, DF1:, DF2: or DF3:) should act as ST drives A: and B:, select NTSC or PAL modes (60 or 50Hz) and, if you wish, to kick a Flicker Fixer into action.

ATARI CLAMPDOWN

Following the release of the Medusa ST emulator reviewed in Issue 16, Atari Germany have injuncted the product in its present form. You can imagine they weren't best pleased that a combination of software and a tiny bit of hardware were all that was necessary to get a very useable ST environment on an Amiga. What really annoyed Atari, though, was the fact that in order to run the emulator it was necessary to rip off the ST TOS via a small program.

Atari tried to take *Chameleon* off the market too, but when they discovered that none of their rights were being infringed they had no choice but to let Maxon continue with the project.

VERDICT

PURPOSE
Software-based Atari ST emulator.

SPEED: GOOD
Boots to ST mode quickly if everything is in the right place, but can crash.

DOCUMENTATION: POOR
In German, but use is simple enough.

ACCESSIBILITY: AVERAGE
It is easy enough to use, but getting hold of the neccessary TOS is tricky.

VALUE: EXCELLENT
Very much cheaper than a hardware system and just as effective.

FEATURES: GOOD
It won't run games software, but legal GEM stuff runs fine. Three screen modes.

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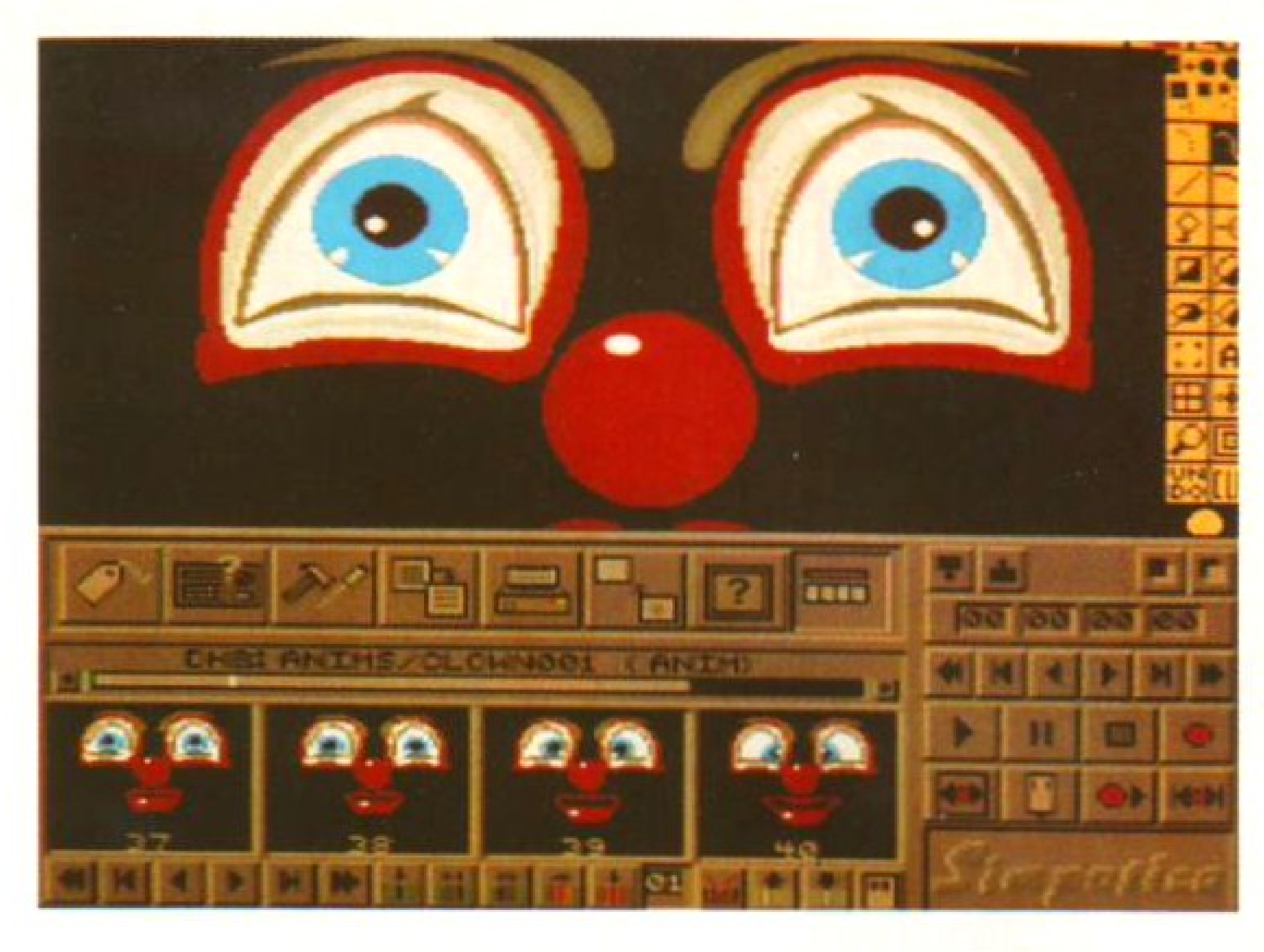
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Put simply, *Simpatica* is a method of editing computer animations and recording them to video tape. Lots of people think they can already do this, with just a video recorder, but this new piece of software automates the procedure, making it easy to produce high-quality, professional results.

You don't get a lot with the pack – a slimline ring-bound manual, a black box and a disk. The black box, the Simpatica interface, connects the computer to any video recorder with a nine-pin control port. These are fairly common on professional VTRs, such as HiBand systems. The software is based around a control panel, with many features lifted straight out of professional recording studios. The reason why the manual is so thin is that each and every one of the controls on the panel has a help screen explaining its usage, so getting to grips with it doesn't entail wading through reams of documentation.

RIGHT: The control panel. Notice the main picture in the background, the preview roll at the bottom right and the video recorder controls at mid-right.



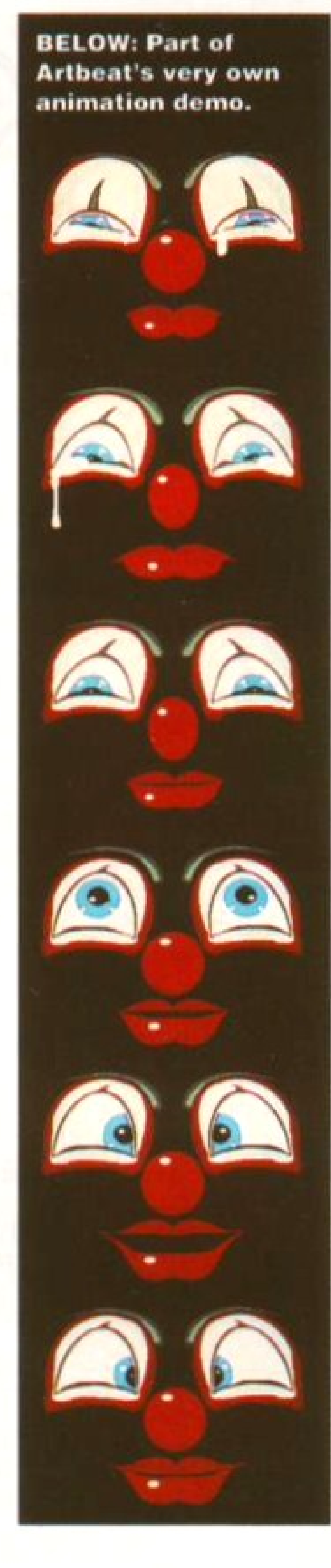
Amiga animations can be truly stunning – and **PAT McDONALD** thinks that we could be seeing a lot more of them on the goggle box in your living room.

Simpatica

Animation-to-video transfer ■ £1795 ■ Artbeat Graphics 081 222 2222

The first part of recording an animation is to 'black' (erase) the tape, and then record an SMPTE timecode onto it. Once that's on, the computer can advance to any individual frame on the tape. Then you are ready to load in some animations – they can be in any standard Amiga graphics format and the system will also support 'sliced HAM' mode, apparently.

BELOW: Part of Artbeat's very own animation demo.



Vision On

You could use *Simpatica* with just floppy disks, but a hard disk drive is highly recommended – and you will need at least 3Meg of memory. Once you have an animation in memory, the tape reel at the bottom left of the screen shows the first four frames.

This tape reel can be advanced or rewound to the exact frame that you want. Cut and paste options are available to give easy video looping – this is something the system is very good at. At no stage is the whole animation sequence loaded into memory – *Simpatica* just keeps track of the cut-down pictures displayed in the tape reel at the bottom of the screen. If you want to see the whole animation in full screen mode, you can – but it will run slower than it should, because the software has to load in each picture from disk.

What you can do is have a mini-sized preview, using the smaller pictures. This preview runs at full speed and most problems with the animation are easily spotted this way – such as missing frames or frames that shouldn't be there. Cutting and pasting the correct frames together is very straightforward and easily checked. Frames can also be 'dwelt' on: this means keeping a frame steady for a few seconds, usually at the end of a video.

Automation

Once you have completed a take in memory (and, because *Simpatica* only loads in the preview-sized pictures, animation sequences can last for minutes rather than seconds) it's time to put it onto the tape. All you do is set it off and it merrily stops and starts the video recorder automatically until it's finished.

The net result is a massive saving in time. Using a manually-controlled recorder, it could easily take twelve hours or more to record a five-minute sequence. With Simpatica, that time is reduced to about four hours, with no manual control needed at all.

Rather than spending those twelve hours or more – and even that's assuming you don't make any mistakes – pressing buttons to advance a frame, record, show next frame, advance, record... you could be designing more animations, or alternatively you could knock off for the evening and let the system get on with the outputting job overnight.

Who needs it?

Simpatica costs a lot of money, but it produces broadcast-quality Amiga graphics and has been designed for video producers rather than home computer enthusiasts. It's powerful and in conjunction with a program like *Sculpt Animate 4D* can create excellent sequences for use in commercials, corporate videos, feature films – you name it.

Mind you, what is an expensive professional tool today is an everyday thing tomorrow. Cheaper systems for home use on standard videos will appear soon: indeed somebody approached me at the CES show and mentioned that they were developing just such a product. Wouldn't you like to make your own films with just your computer? I certainly would!

VERDICT

PURPOSE
Editing animations and recording them at broadcast quality onto video tape.

SPEED: GOOD
Although *Simpatica* takes a while, it's not necessary to sit there and wait for it.

DOCUMENTATION: POOR
Not a wonderful manual, but the onscreen help certainly makes up for it.

ACCESSIBILITY: EXCELLENT
Very easy to get to grips with – designed for non-computer users.

VALUE: GOOD
There's no competition in this area and *Simpatica* will take some beating.

FEATURES: EXCELLENT
Very good at what it does – but at the price, that's what you would expect.

With the right software, you're in business.



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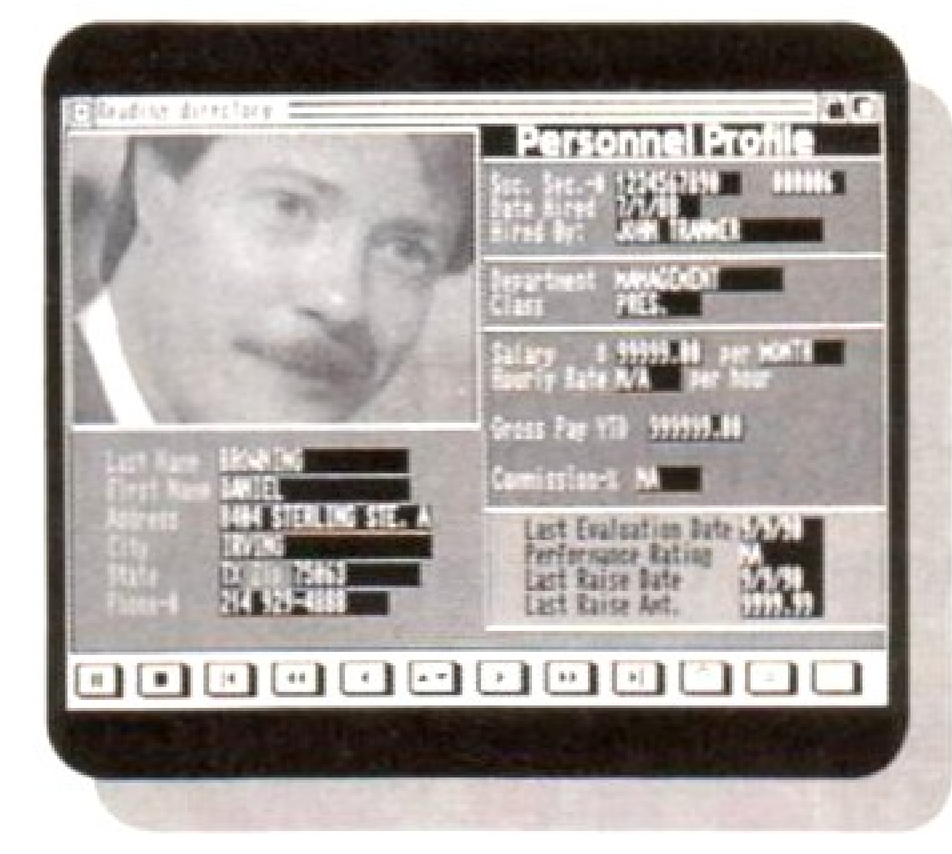
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A Miniature Miscellany

Getting an intensive testing this month are a few interestingly small new gadgets: a midget accelerator card, a miniature printer and a relatively little 4 Meg RAM expansion. **PAT McDONALD** probes further.

This is a strange-looking beast and no mistake! Most printers are not very tall and spread themselves over a wide area. This one is tall and narrow, shaped a bit like an overlarge brick. Far from being a liability, this means it occupies less space than most printers.

Inside, it's slightly strange too. Most of the printhead is mounted vertically, to save on space. You would think that getting access to such a printer would be tricky: in fact it's easier, due to two large doors which can be opened to expose the interior for the occasional clean. You could use a domestic vacuum cleaner on it to suck up all those bits of fluffthat seem to accumulate in printers.



time) and can also print out barcode labels with very little fuss indeed.

What, no Prefs?

Lots of people complain that they can't get hold of a suitable printer driver to get their Amiga and printer working in harmony. Fujitsu have also thought of that problem – so if you specify the Amiga version, a disk containing a suitable printer driver is included free in the price. Not only that, but there's also a menu-driven program to configure the printer to do exactly what you want. Admitedly you can buy 24-pin printers for £100 less than the price of a DL1100, but you then have the chore of finding a driver to get the damn thing to work.

Fujitsu DL1100

24-pin dot matrix printer ■ £375 ■ Fujitsu Europe 081 573 4444

Fujitsu have done an excellent job on the controlling software that runs the printer. It can accept four different control code systems: Fujitsu's own DPL24C, IBM ProPrinter XL24, Epson LQ-2500 and also Epson LQ-2550. These are all selectable from the control panel on the front of the printer, as are most of its features.

Font Forays

There are eight resident fonts stored in the printer. These are Courier 10, Pica 10, Prestige Elite 12, Boldface PS, Correspondence, Compression, Draft and High Speed Draft. The numbers after certain fonts refer to the number of characters per inch (CPI).

Others don't have them because they are proportional, ie they vary in their CPI rate. However, there is a variable pitch setting for different-sized character printing. Different typestyles are also available – italic, condensed, shadow and bold printing can be selected.

Other fonts are available as plug-in font cards. Other possible add-ons include a seven-colour printing kit, an optional serial interface rather than the standard parallel one, plus more printer emulation, again with add-on cards. You don't need a cut sheet feeder – one is included as standard. So you can either use computer stationery (the sort with the holes on either side to feed through the tractor sprockets) or ordinary sheet paper.

Speed and Power

One slight problem with the unit is that it comes with a two-pin plug that won't work in the UK. You have to cut it off and wire on a household three pin 13A plug. Once that chore is out of the way you can get on and print.

One feature that the DL1100 doesn't have is phenomenal printing speed. It can cope with 50 characters per second in letter quality mode, and can manage 200 CPS working in high-speed drive mode.

Some of the more specialist features of the printer are that it has a reallignment function (for when some of the pins go slightly off-centre over

Normal
Outline
Shaded
Outline, Sha

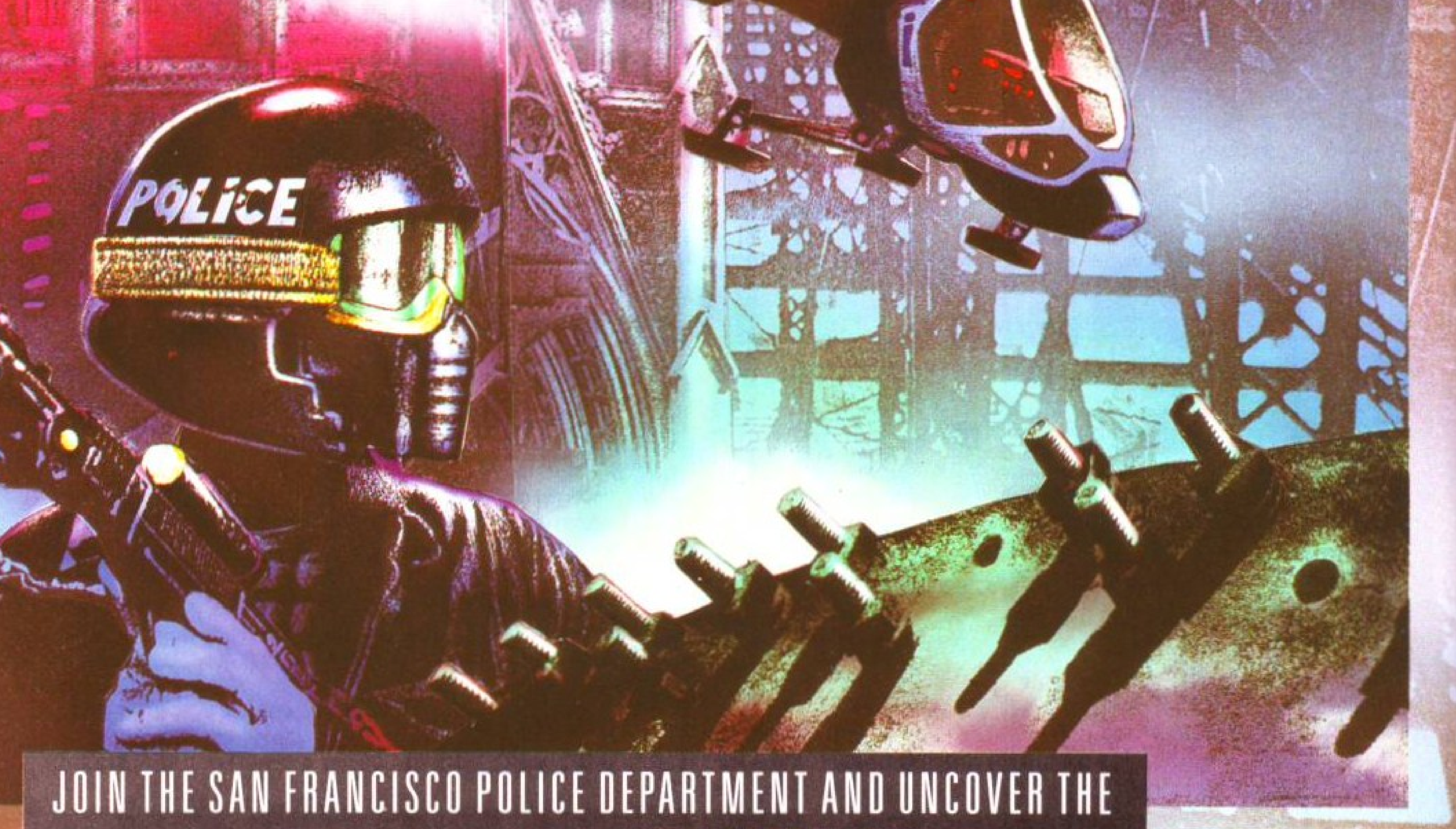
Prestige Elite
Draft
Compressed
Boldface PS
Pica 10
Correspondance
High-Speed Dra

With no extras, ten different fonts are available – the high-speed draft option being very useful for program listings.

VERDICT

PURPOSE:
General purpose high quality printer.
SPEED: AVERAGE
Nothing special in this department.
DOCUMENTATION: GOOD
Very well-written manual, lots of illustration, lots of information.
ACCESSIBILITY: EXCELLENT
That front control panel plus the supplied driver disk score well here.
VALUE: GOOD
So long as you're not too fussed about speed, this printer sets a standard.
FEATURES: GOOD
Lots of features for those who need them, plus upgrade potential.

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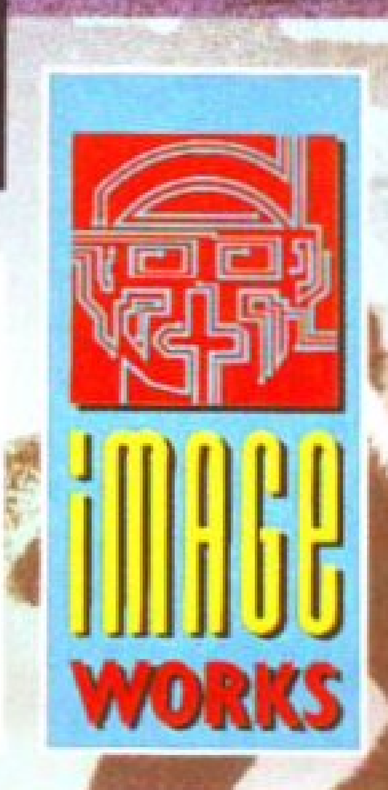


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Fast as the Amiga may seem, it's not as fast as it could be. Anyone who has ever used mathematically intensive software (ray-tracing packages like *Turbo Silver* or graphics manipulators like *Pixmate* come to mind as examples) will have gritted their teeth as the machine ground its way through millions of calculations.

You could always fit an accelerator card, such as this one. This is a card with a faster processor on it than the standard 68000 chip fitted in A500 and A2000 machines (the card under review will fit in either machine or the older A1000).

The Mega Midget Racer is fitted with a 68030 processor. This can work at clock speeds of 25-33 MHz, a figure which compares favourably with the average 68000 at 7MHz. There's more to it than that, though – the MMR can have a Floating Point Unit attached, a maths co-processor specially designed to do floating point calculations – that's something which normal processors find laborious.

The story doesn't quite end there – a 68030 can also access 32-bit memory, rather than the normal 16-bit. What this means is that a 68030 can read to or write from greater amounts of memory per clock cycle than a 68000 – the memory isn't larger, just more accessible.

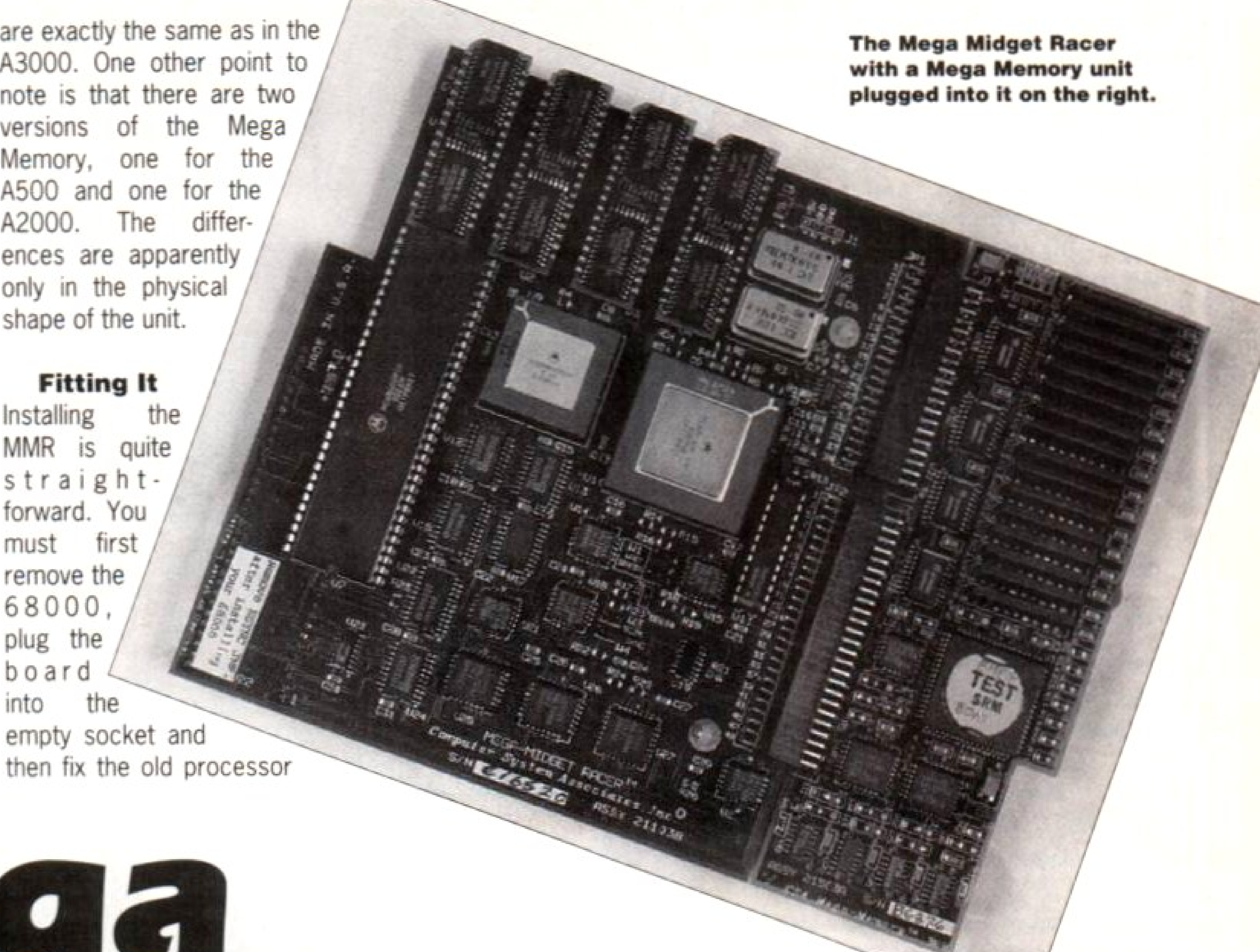
The Price is Right?

So, fitting a Mega Midget Racer with 33 MHz 68030 processor plus an opitional 50 MHz 68882 FPU will considerably speed up mathematically intensive software. Unfortunately that would be rather expensive – about £800 at Bytes & Pieces' current rates (£450 for a MMR fitted with a 33 MHz 68030, and £350 for the FPU).

What you can do is buy each bit individually over time. The lowest price is for an MMR fitted with a 25 MHz 68030 at £375. Up to 8 Megs of 32-bit RAM can be added to the board in the form of the Mega Memory, a separate add-on that starts at £299 for 2 Megs, £399 for 4 Megs and £799 for the full 8 Megs. The chips used in the Mega Memory are exactly the same as in the A3000. One other point to note is that there are two versions of the Mega Memory, one for the A500 and one for the A2000. The differences are apparently only in the physical shape of the unit.

Fitting It

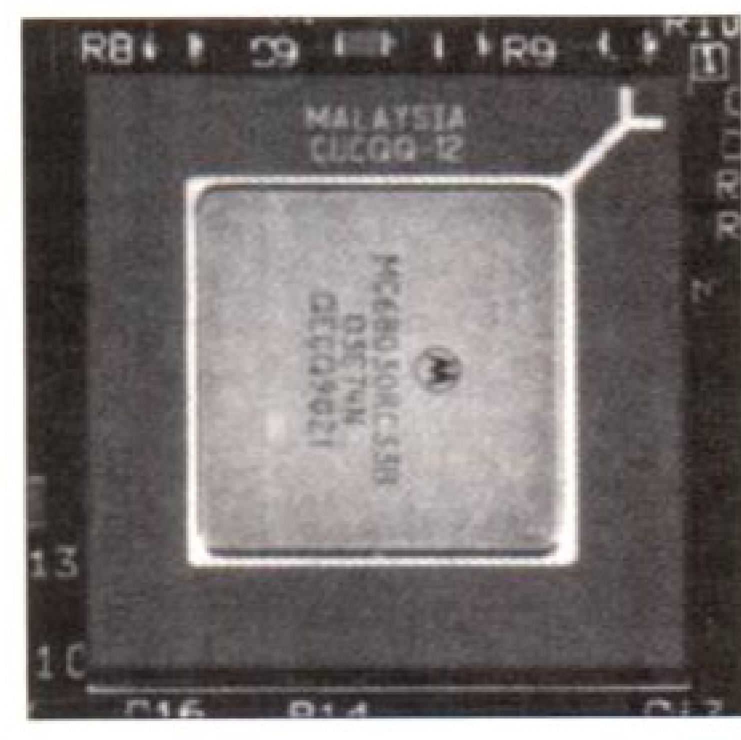
Installing the MMR is quite straightforward. You must first remove the 68000, plug the board into the empty socket and then fix the old processor into an empty socket on the board. You don't have to do this last step, but if you do then you can run any software that isn't happy about working with the faster processor – a thoughtful compatibility feature. The actual board design is excellent – lots of flatpacks and surface-mounted components – indeed, state of the art is not too strong a term to use.



The Mega Midget Racer with a Mega Memory unit plugged into it on the right.

Mega Midget Racer

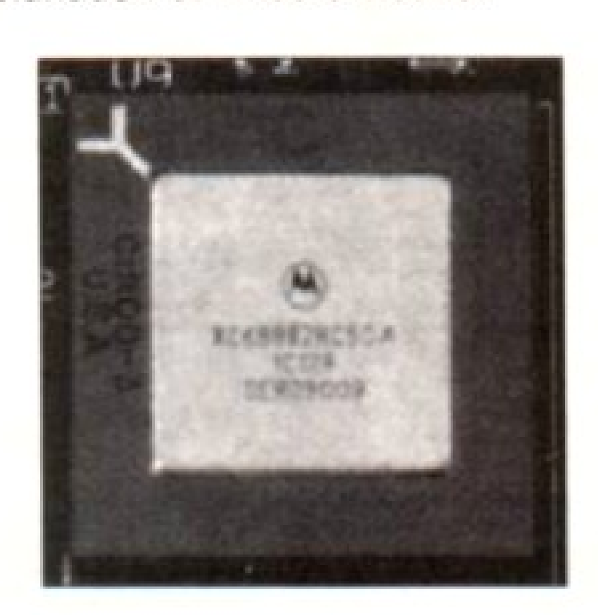
68030 Accelerator card ■ £375 ■ Bytes n Pieces 0253 734218



LEFT: The 68030 processor can work at any clock speed from 16 to 33 MHz.

During testing, the whole machine crashed and wouldn't reboot. A quick internal inspection revealed the culprit – it was me! I'd neglected to make sure there were no cables trapped under the board, which is a close fit. After sorting out the cable from the internal floppy drive I had no more problems with this.

To get the thing working properly, there's a checklist of jumpers and connections listed in the manual. The good news is that you don't have to bother with them – Bytes & Pieces make sure that the system is delivered ready configured. The manual is otherwise a bit on the terse side, full of technical jargon but with little explanation of what it means.



RIGHT: Adding a 68882 FPU greatly speeds up mathematical calculations involving fractions.

Soft Options

Once it's installed, you then run the software supplied on a floppy to check that the right processor is working and the RAM, FPU etc are working properly. A program called *CSA-MMR* must be run (include the name in your startup-sequence and you'll be fine). Adding some switches to it will configure the system exactly: SROM will shadow the Kickstart ROM

Continued overleaf ▸

into the 32-bit SRAM area (supposing that one is fitted!): SRAM will add any remaining SRAM to the fast memory area: DRAM will configure the Mega Memory board to add its RAM to the system, and so on.

The feature of 'shadowing' (copying) the Kickstart ROM to 32-bit RAM will speed up the system even more, assuming that the software you want to use needs the Kickstart routines.

On · top of this main set-up program, there are also several others on the disk. *Amiga_Status* displays information about just what is connected to the computer. *Switch_CPU* will change back to the 68000, as mentioned above, rebooting the system in doing so: finally the *CSA_Analyzers* (68000 and 68030 versions) serve as a comparison benchmark to show how much it can outperform a standard Amiga.

How good is it?

By way of comparison, the *CSA_Analyzer* program was run on a standard A500, an A3000 and an A500 fitted with the full MMR setup. The ordinary A500 took nearly three hours to complete the test: the A3000, about two minutes: and the MMR took 96 seconds, beating the A3000 by about 36%!

So, is the A3000 dead and buried? By no means. For one thing, it wasn't accelerated to the same degree as the MMR. And for another, the A3000 is the only computer that supports the Zorro III card standard. What's that? Well, as you know the A2000 can have expansion cards plugged into it internally – this standard is known as Zorro II. Zorro III can have Zorro II cards plugged into it, but they won't work the other way around. Zorro III cards have a 32 bit bus, which means that Zorro III style addon cards will be much faster and have more potential than the equivalent Zorro II card.

There's also the fact that an A3000 has 2 Meg of chip RAM, and Workbench 2. But unless you really want these, an A500, A1500 or A2000 fitted with an MMR will probably prove much cheaper – and of course, you can run all of the Amiga software that has so far appeared.

VERDICT

PURPOSE:
Expandable accelerator card.
SPEED: EXCELLENT
Let's face it, you can't go faster.
DOCUMENTATION: AVERAGE
Contains everything you need to know, albeit in shorthand form.
ACCESSIBILITY: GOOD
Software is fairly easy to grasp.
VALUE : GOOD
A fair price for what you get, considering the cost of components.
FEATURES: EXCELLENT
Can be expanded according to your pocket, up to the full limit of the Amiga.

BASEboard

RAM Expansion Card ■ £299.95 ■ EPD 0602 841640

The BASEboard is really two boards: one goes into the Gary chip's socket, the other plugs into the trapdoor slot underneath the Amiga.

Yes, out of the many RAM expansions reviewed in *AF* 16, it was understandable that some should arrive late. So here's a belated look at the BASEboard, a modest example for the A500.

The BASEboard is probably the cheapest available in terms of supplying a fair amount of memory for not much money. A fully expanded 4 Megs will set you back £299.95 – compare that with a Cortex unit which only has 2 Megs for the same price. You can buy the unit without any memory and add your own chips later according to how much you want and can afford.

In order to use the BASEboard, your computer will have to have some fairly drastic open heart surgery. This entails removing the Gary chip, plugging in a expander unit to the empty socket, putting Gary into the expander unit and connecting the main memory board (in the trapdoor slot, underneath the A500). Sounds a bit involved? It is, but once it's done you don't have to fuss with it again.

The BASEboard includes a number of interesting features. The first of these is to convert to 1 Meg of chip RAM (see Workbench this month on Page 278 for a full explanation of this tricky subject). A real-time clock is included as standard, and when fully expanded – 4 Meg of memory – you can plug in an extra 2 Meg on a separate daughter-board into the main unit.

The construction is sound and uncomplicated, the manual is competent if not outstanding and a disk is included to configure the memory to work: unfortunately, because the unit plugs into the trapdoor slot, it doesn't automatically tell the computer how much extra memory is available.

It is true that there are units which can add more memory in total. On the other hand, most people don't really need a fully-expanded Amiga (that's 9 Megs of RAM total).

BASEboard provides an adequate amount of memory for most people's needs. It's not that difficult to fit and will work fine once the machine knows that it's there.

The only real hassle is that you have to run a disk for the machine to recognize all of the memory. This can be incorparated into most software quite easily, so the BASEboard is ideal for most home uses.

VERDICT

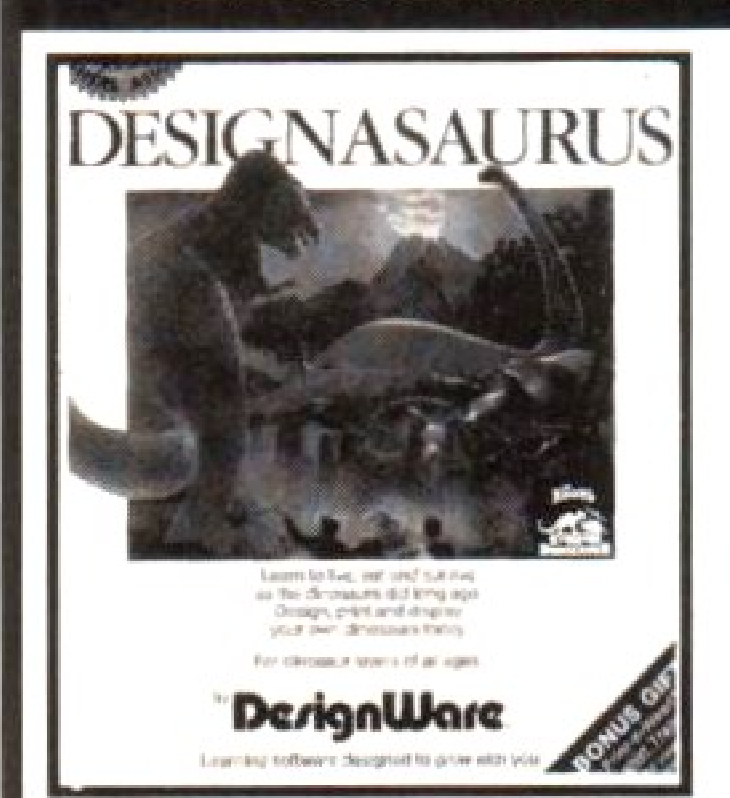
PURPOSE:
Memory expansion for the A500.
SPEED: AVERAGE
No faster or slower than any other 16-bit memory board.
DOCUMENTATION: GOOD
Doesn't mess about, tells you what you need to know.
ACCESSIBILITY: AVERAGE.
A pity you have to configure the memory every time you use it.
VALUE: GOOD
Lots of memory for not much money.
FEATURES: GOOD
Fitted with a 1 Meg chip memory option and real time clock.







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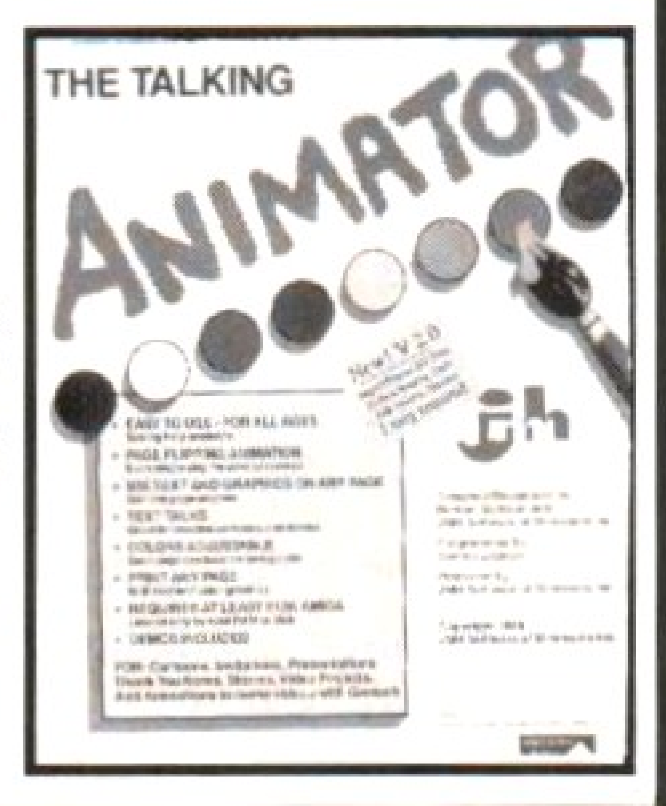


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Taking the First Steps

Just got hold of your new machine? Have you read the manuals? Still confused? **MARK SMIDDY** offers an alternative introduction to the Amiga.

If there's one thing you can be sure your new Amiga will do from time to time, it's crash. The machine freezes, the screen drops by about an inch and a hideous red flashing box framed against a black background appears bearing the message "Guru Meditation" and some rather confusing numbers. It does little for the heart rate, less for the stress level, and tends to make you think 'What did I do wrong?'

Let's get something straight. You did nothing wrong – the program did. People are frightened by computers, but never get the idea the computer is in control - you are. Overcoming this simple (and quite natural) fear is the first and most important step you will take on the road to understanding the machine. Don't be afraid of tinkering around with programs - generally, you can't do any damage.



Avoiding Disaster

At this point, it has to be assumed you have at least managed to put all the bits together. Now you're ready and itching to start the machine – wait! There are several rules which must be followed before proceeding.

■ Never eat or drink near your computer. Tea and coffee are bad enough, but fizzy drinks spell a cocktail of disasters. Because of the huge sugar content, a splash of lemonade, coke, or even still orange will jam a keyswitch as fast as epoxy resin and it's just as hard to remove. Worse, if these materials get onto the PCB they can eat through the copper tracks and short circuit components. Like a cancer, these effects take time to become noticeable – even a small spill could cause trouble for months.

■ The machine has very few moving parts – and all the moving parts are self-lubricating. This means you MUST NOT go fiddling with a can of WD-40 or 3-In-1. Amiga disk drives are quite noisy – this is normal.

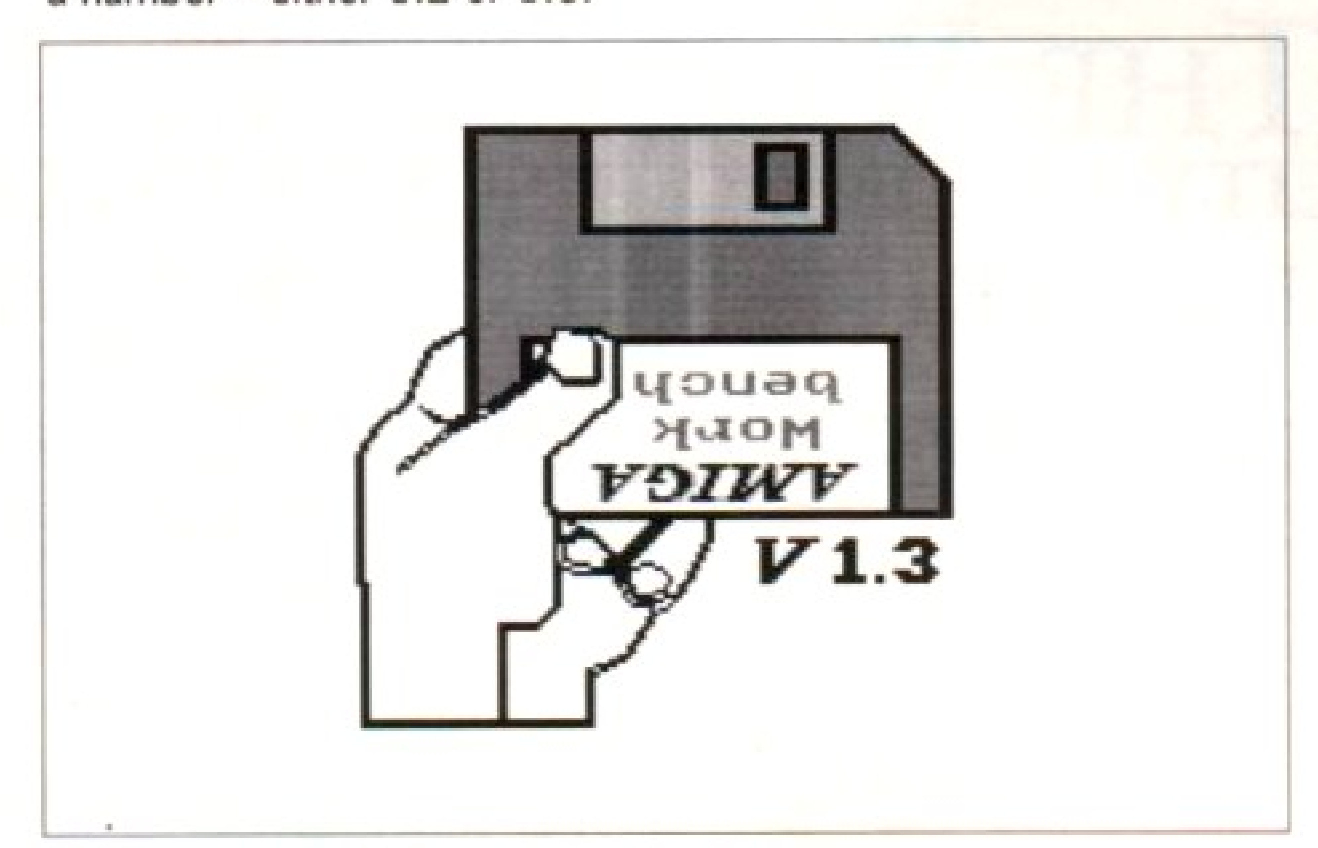
■ Lastly, this warning applies to everyone, especially to users upgrading from machines such as Spectrums, BBCs and C64s. If you have to reset the machine use the CTRL-Amiga-Amiga set of keys, as described in the manual. Do NOT switch it rapidly off and on again: if you must do it this way, leave the machine switched OFF for AT LEAST 10 seconds before switching on again. This point cannot be stressed strongly enough.

LESSON 1: BOOTING

You will need:

- Your Amiga, plugged in and ready to switch on.
- The disk marked Workbench
- At least one blank disk

When you switch on (and tune the TV channel if necessary) you'll get a picture of a hand holding a big blue thing carrying the words "Amiga Workbench". The picture is upside down – but don't worry, that's to tell you how to put a disk in. Below this is a number – either 1.2 or 1.3.



Make a note of this number, it's the version number of the Kickstart installed in your machine. Most new machines should display version 1.3, whereas older, second-hand ones may be 1.2 – at this stage the difference is immaterial.

To avoid confusion, this series will cover just Workbench 1.3 and 1.2/1.3 Kickstarts because it was felt the other versions are so rare (too old or too new) they would only serve to confuse the issue.

A Problem

If the power light comes on but, after a few seconds, the display is showing red, yellow, green, or blue without the usual "hand and disk" picture – switch off. Refer to the panel 'Self-Test' on the last page of this article, p242!

A Quick Lesson

Now, insert a BLANK disk in the internal drive and watch carefully. You should notice that the hand-disk icon vanished for a short time then comes back again.

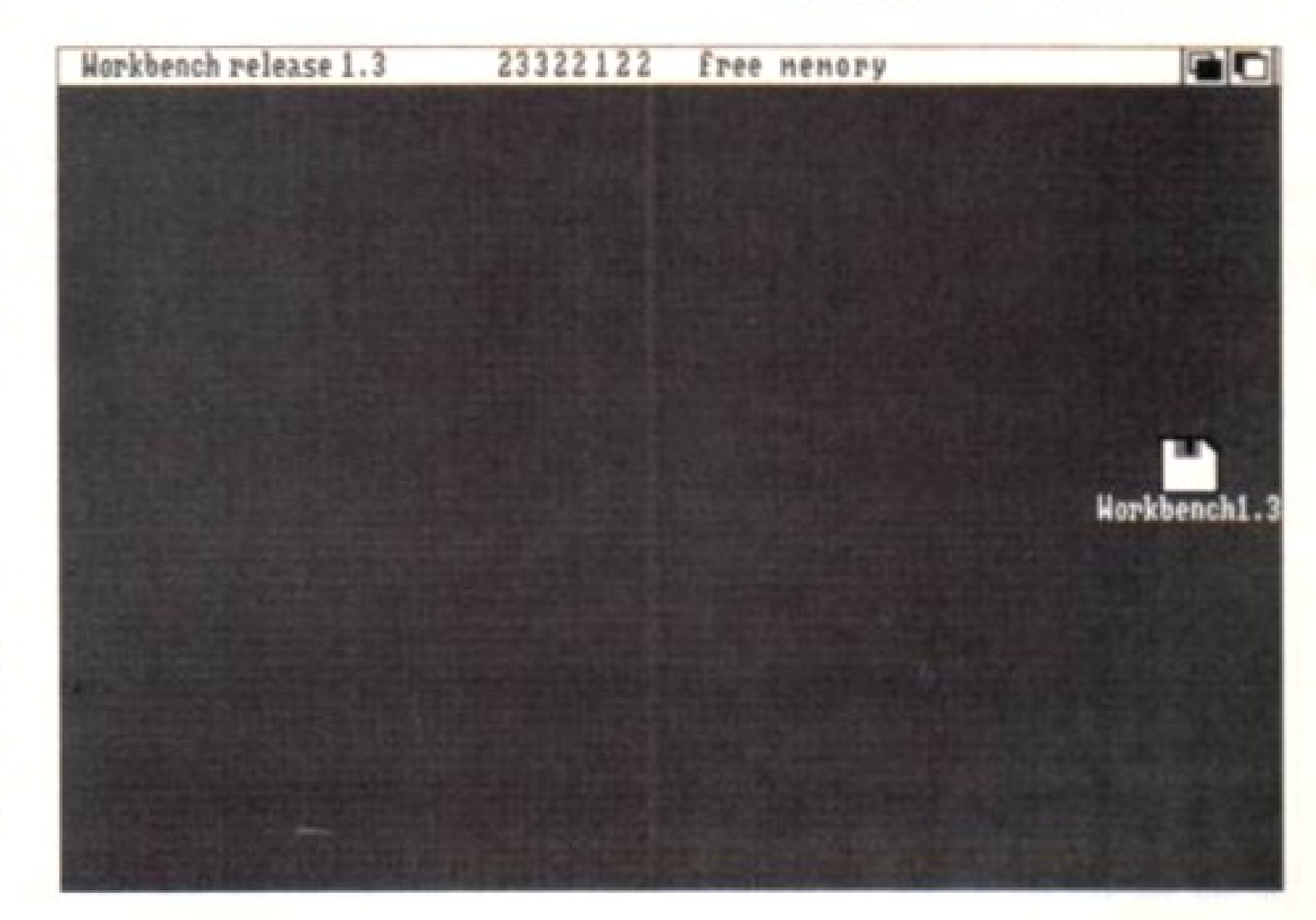
Why? The Amiga is intelligent enough to recognise you have inserted a disk so it attempts to boot from it. However, since this was a blank disk it can't do anything, so it asks again for a Workbench disk.

Workbench disks are specially prepared boot disks – because it's safer to only boot from a disk that's been specially prepared. This way you don't go around accidentally trying to boot a data disk. This exercise has been about finding out what happens when you make a mistake. This way, you'll soon learn to recognise what the Amiga is trying to tell you.

(If your machine has a hard disk – say an A590 – and a 1.3 Kickstart, there's a good chance none of this happened and you're now staring at the Workbench screen – hard disks will be covered later.)

Now you're itching to get started, remove the blank disk. But before inserting the Workbench disk, make a note of the version number that is written on the disk label: 1.2, 1.3 or 1.3.2. When you've done that, insert the disk and wait for the Workbench screen to appear.

Continued overleaf ➡



LESSON 2: CHANGING DISKS

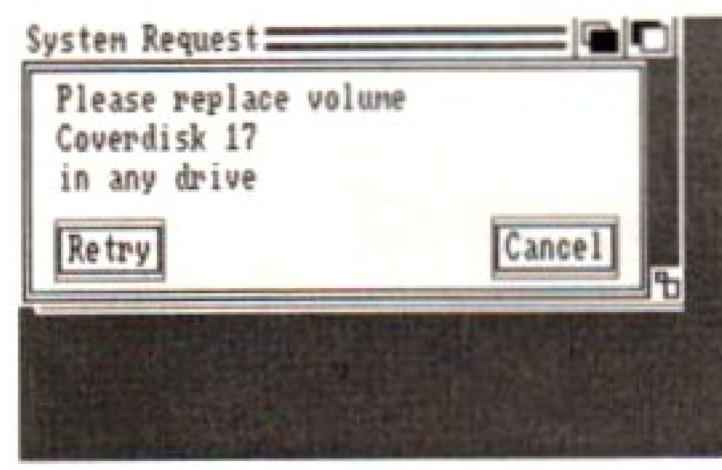
You will need:

• The disk marked Workbench

This is Workbench – one of the most friendly GUIs (Graphical User Interfaces) around. Let's see how good it is. First, remove the Workbench disk from your internal drive. The 'internal' drive is the one in the side of your A500, so called because it is physically inside the case of the Amiga – this is also called DF0: or Unit 0.

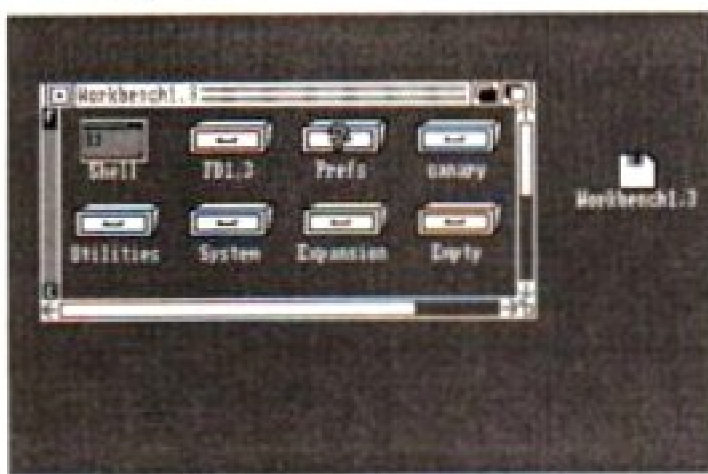
Now, move the pointer over the small picture marked Workbench 1.2/3 and press the left mouse button twice in quick succession.

This operation is called a double-click and is used to "open" a disk. Opening a disk is rather like opening a drawer to find out what's inside. However, since you've just removed the disk from the drive, the Amiga brings up a message box (called a 'requester') asking you to replace the correct disk – (called, for some reason, a 'volume') in any drive:



Now position the pointer over the box marked "Cancel" and press the left mouse button once. This is called a "click" and clicking a button in this way is called "selecting a gadget". Here, the Cancel box is the gadget. The screen will flash briefly and a message will appear at the the top of the screen stating "This drawer cannot be opened."

Go back over the last few steps and try to "open" the Workbench 1.2/3 disk once more. When the requester appears, pop the Workbench 1.2/3 disk back in the drive and WAIT. After a couple of seconds the requester vanishes (as if by magic) and a new "window" appears showing the contents of the disk.



The thing to learn from this lesson is that there's usually no need for you to tell the Amiga you have inserted a disk and you don't need to click on anything in the message box: it can work that out for itself.

LESSON 3: MAKING A BACKUP

You will need:

• Two blank, 3.5" floppy disks.
• The disk marked Workbench

The next job, especially if you're new to the machine, is to make two copies of the Workbench disk. This is vital – if the original becomes faulty the machine will be rendered totally useless, except for playing games.

What happens next is very dependent on which version of Workbench you have – because there's a curious bug in the Workbench 1.3.2 version of the command used to copy an entire disk.

Diskcopy for 1.2 and 1.3

This job, like most on the Amiga is much simpler if you have more than one drive. For the purposes of this exercise, we'll assume you only have one drive.

• Insert the Workbench 1.2/3 disk in DF0: the internal drive.

• Click once on the disk's icon – it will change colour slightly to confirm this. It is now 'selected'.





• Press and hold the RIGHT mouse button. The white bar at the top of the screen will now show: Workbench Disk Special.

• Still holding down the right button, move the pointer to the word Workbench and a small "menu" will appear with the following options: Open, Close, Duplicate, Rename, Info, Discard. By moving the pointer to each word in turn, you'll see a bar appear to highlight the option.

Notice some of the choices are 'ghosted' – that is, shown in a pale grey – and cannot be selected. This is for safety. (If you cannot select *any* of the options, go back to the Workbench disk icon and click it again.)

When the bar is over the word Duplicate, release the button and the requester in Figure 1 will appear.



Figure 1

The single drive DiskCopy requester – insert source.

• Click on the gadget marked "Continue". A small window will appear showing the progress of the diskcopy operation and after a short while another requester like the one in Figure 2) will appear. Elsewhere on the Workbench, the disk icon will change to say "DF0:Busy"



Figure 2

The single drive DiskCopy requester – insert destination.

• Now, remove the Workbench disk from the drive, insert one of the blank disks you have to hand, and select the gadget marked Continue.

• Repeat the last two steps until the message "Diskcopy finished" appears in the box on the screen.

• After a few seconds the message window will disappear and you will now have another disk icon marked "Copy of Workbench1.2/3"

• Click once on the disk icon marked "Copy of Workbench". Now press and hold the right mouse button and move the pointer to the Workbench menu (as before) but this time select "Rename". A small box will appear containing the name of the disk – this is called a text gadget (Figure 3).



Figure 3

The text gadget in which an item is given a new name.

• Point at the letter "C" in Copy and press the left mouse button. Now press the key marked "Del" a few times until the words "Copy of" have been removed.

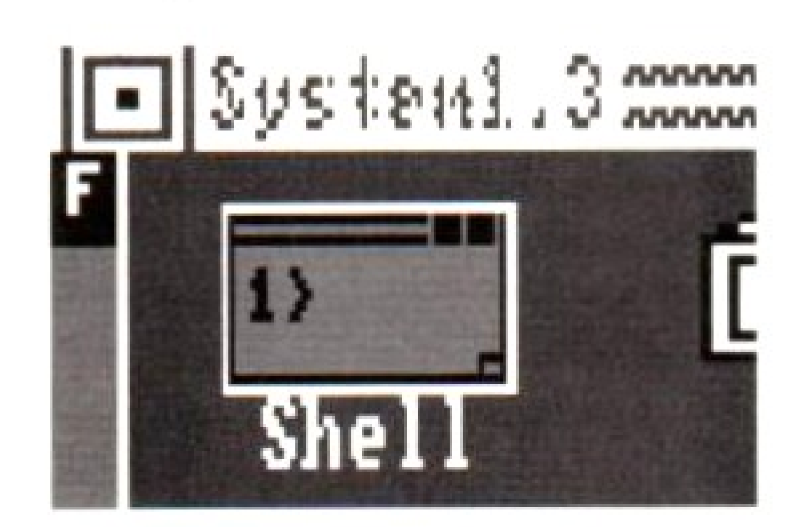
Finally press the either the key marked "Enter" or the return key, the large key marked with an L-shaped arrow (next to the @/# key).

• Repeat the entire operation for the second blank disk. Mark it "Copy of Workbench" (plus the date) them put it and the original in a SAFE place. Next time you are asked for Workbench, use one of the copies – never the original.

Diskcopy for 1.3.2

This version of Workbench saw an unforeseen bug creep into the Diskcopy command so it only works from the Shell.

• Insert the Workbench 1.3.2 disk into drive df0: and open it by double clicking on its icon.



• Look for an icon marked "Shell" and open in the same way as you opened disk. Shell is a tricky subject which will be covered later in this series, so for now just follow the instructions. When you see the word <Return> press the key marked "Return" or "Enter" on your keyboard. If you're not sure which one this is, consult the manual supplied with the machine.

• When the Shell is started it opens a window and displays a "prompt" which looks something like this:

1.SYS>

This is Shell's way of telling you it's ready to accept commands which you must type from the keyboard. The following instructions mirror a typical session. What you see is what you enter. Don't re-type the prompt – the picture below shows an example:

1.SYS>DISKCOPY DF0: to DF0: NAME "Workbench1.3" <Return>

Shell replies:
Place SOURCE disk (FROM disk) in drive DF0:
Press RETURN to continue
• So press <Return>

Shell replies:
Reading XX, XX to go
Place DESTINATION disk (TO disk) in drive DF0:
Press RETURN to continue
• Press <Return> again

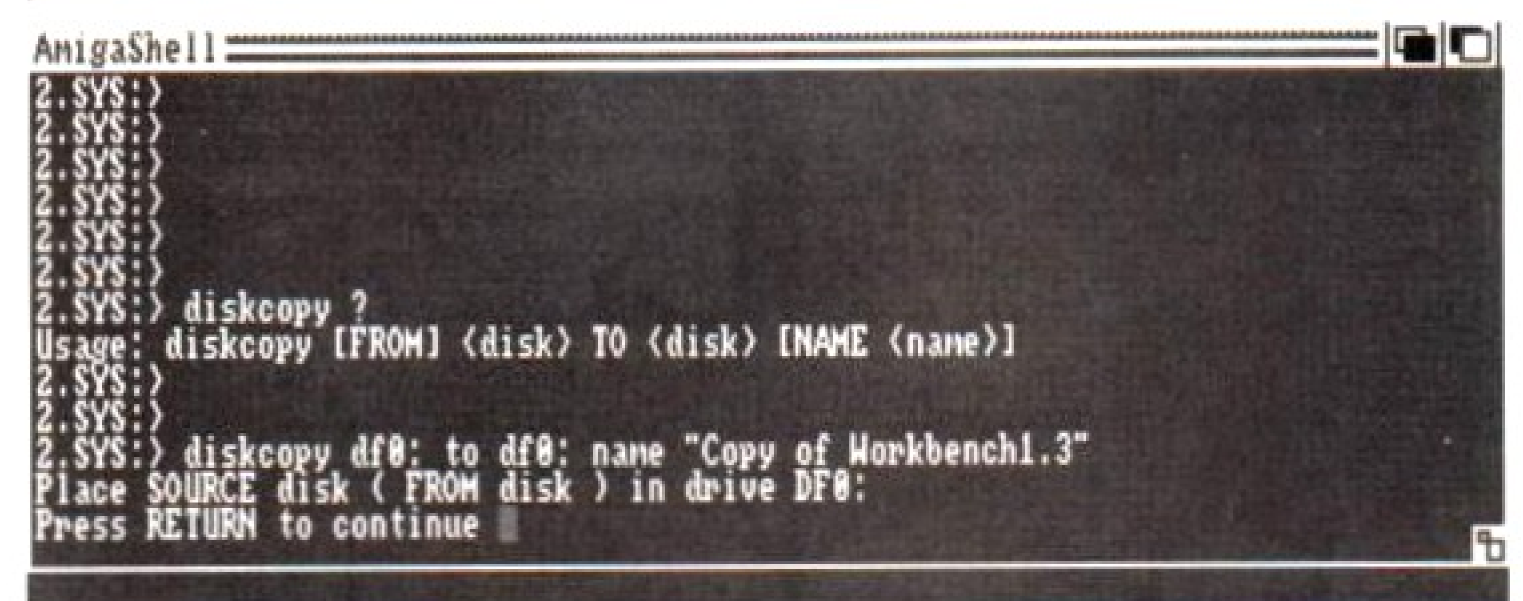
Shell replies:
Writing XX, XX to go

• You may have to change disks several times during this operation. It depends on how much memory is fitted to the machine. Make sure you put the correct disk in each time, though! When the counter reaches 79 the Shell replies:
Writing 79, 00 to go
Diskcopy finished

• Repeat these steps for the second disk. At the prompt (1.SYS>) type: ENDCLI<Return>. Now the Shell window will go away. Now mark both disks "Copy of Workbench" plus the date and put the original and one of the copies away in a safe place.

Next time you are asked for Workbench, use one of the copies – never the original.

Thus endeth the first lesson. ■



SELF-TEST

When the Amiga is turned on, it goes through a series of self-tests. This is built into the ROM and helps to safeguard against trouble. What actually happens is irrelevant to the average user – unless something goes wrong!

Every time the machine is booted these tests are carried out. Watch carefully, the display goes: dark grey, light grey, then asks for a disk. On the main unit, the "Caps Lock" light flashes once (or at least it should) to indicate the keyboard is functioning correctly. If the display comes up some other colour or, rarely, the Caps Lock light flashes more than once, there's trouble.

Don't panic. Switch off and re-check you've connected everything correctly. If you have something like an A590 or similar hanging on the expansion port of an A500 it MUST be switched on FIRST. If not, the electronics in the machine will think something is broken and flag a serious hardware failure.

Note also, some virus killers and other resident software, announce themselves by flashing the display funny colours during boot up. This is normal and nothing to worry about. If there's a problem, screen will stay that colour. The colours mean something to Amiga engineers, they need not concern you.

The A-Z of Computer Terms

Builds up in Monthly parts to a complete glossary. Part One: A-C

68000: Base processor used in most Amigas. Other processors are available and range from 68010 – which isn't much different, to the 68040 which is a wolf in a pure new wool. See: CPU

A1000: The original Amiga. Comes with precious little RAM and Kickstart on disk.

A2000: An A1000 in a different case with better expansion produced by Commodore Germany and now superceded by the B2000 (below).

A3000/3500: The latest in Amiga systems. All singing, all dancing, but still can't make tea. Comes with the latest version of Workbench.

A500: The most basic Amiga still in production and the only one ever to have an integral keyboard and main unit.

A501: Commodore's 512K RAM expansion and battery backed-up clock for the A500. See also: A500

A590: Commodore's hard disk drive for the A500. See also: HD, A501

AmigaDOS: Amiga Disk Operating System. Commodore's multi-tasking DOS. See also: DOS, Kickstart

APL: A Programming Language.

Assignment: The logical (DOS) name representing a device, directory or path. A kind of shorthand. Users can (in theory) read and write to assignments just as they would read and write to devices - without having to know what it is. See also: Device, Path

Asyncronous: A child process which once started, runs independently of the process which started it. See also: Syncronous

B2000: The "real" Amiga 2000 and till recently the flagship of the fleet. Aimed at professional users with internal expansion slots. Features 1Mb RAM and separate keyboard and base unit.

BASIC: Beginners All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code. A universal programming language for all men. Great if you get a good one – bad if you don't.

Bit: A single binary value – either one or zero. When quoting memory size, some manufacturers quote xxxxx Mbits, the number of Kbytes multiplied by eight.

Boolean: Rarely seen in AmigaDOS (at command level). This term is used to indicate a result been returned is either TRUE or FALSE.

Boot or Bootstrap: The process of starting the machine or a piece of software, viz: "First boot your Workbench disk, then boot FootBall by double clicking on its icon." The term boot derives from a famous expressionism about "pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps [laces]." Hence also the name, Kickstart. Although this term has been adopted for computers, its roots are in electronics and isn't accurate. Unless you think of it as giving the machine a kick to wake it up.

Byte: A unit of measurement in the computer binary system. A byte is a unit of store and consists of eight bits or two nybbles.

C: A programming language used to develop operating systems like Kickstart and AmigaDOS. Also used for a bundle of other things because it's the in thing to do.

CDTV: Commodore Dynamic Total Vision: The latest development in the Amiga 500 systems. An A500 with a high-quality CD attached. Promises to be a special machine when it arrives.

Centronics port: Generic term for the printer port.

Charityware: Shareware software used and distributed in the same way, but instead of paying the authors for its use, you are expected to make a contribution to a certain charity.

Click: The action of positioning the mouse pointer over and icon and pressing the left mouse button.

Co Processor: See FPU

Cold boot: To reset the machine by switching it off and and then on again. The machine must be left OFF for at least 10 seconds before switching on or the sensitive Amiga chips may sustain costly damage.

CPU: Central Processing Unit. This is where all the hard work gets done – the machine's brain if you like. The Amiga uses the 680x0 series of CPUs with the 68000 being the most common. The 68010 is sometimes offered as a cheap upgrade.

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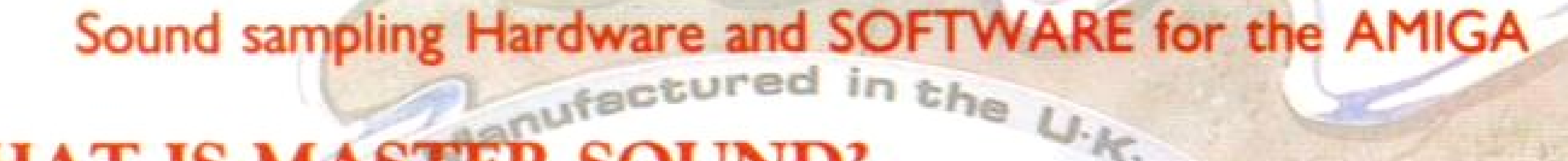
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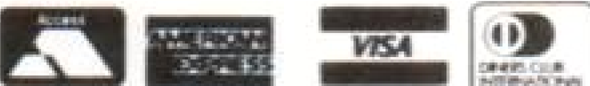
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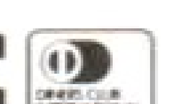
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Christmas Books

Get to grips with the complexities of your Amiga, learn about programming or solve your present problems with a book. **JEFF WALKER** picks out the best.

New Owners

Of all the AmigaDOS books on the shelves, *AmigaDOS: A Dabhand Guide* by Mark Burgess is most readable. It assumes no previous knowledge, starting by introducing the reader to the jargon. Each topic has a chapter to itself – Workbench, the command line (CLI), files, directories – the main body of the book is an alphabetical reference to AmigaDOS commands and later chapters cover advanced topics. **Dabs Press, £14.95.**

Once you feel confident enough to go exploring, you're going to need some guide books to point you to all the interesting places. Nothing does it better than two books from Abacus – *Tricks & Tips* and *More Tricks & Tips*. Listings are mainly in AmigaBASIC, but there's a smattering of machine code too, to get you interested. **By Bleek, Maelger and Weltner, Abacus, £14.95 and £18.45.**

Developers

If you intend to write commercially, you're not going to get very far without the official Commodore manuals. There are three of them – the *Amiga Hardware Reference Manual*, the *Amiga ROM Kernel Reference Manual: Includes and Autodocs*, and the *Amiga ROM Kernel Reference Manual: Libraries and Devices*. Make sure you get the new versions with the blue covers. **All by Commodore-Amiga Inc. via Addison-Wesley, £21.95, £28.95 and £32.95 respectively.**

Because of the size of the Reference Manuals, it can sometimes be difficult finding information, so Compute! has come up with its own potted version that caters for C, machine code and Modula-2. It maps every shared library routine, every system structure, all the hardware registers, plus the character set, rawkeys, printer codes and Guru meditations. You're not going to learn all there is to know from this one book – beginners will need a tutorial on the language of their choice as well – but *Mapping The Amiga* could become the most dog-eared book on your shelf. **By Anderson and Thompson, Compute!, £20.95.**

Another indispensable book and a thoroughly good read to boot *(tread carefully here, Jeff – Ed)*, is Ariadne's *Kickstart Guide to the Amiga*. Although written for versions 1.1 and 1.2 of the operating system, most of it applies to 1.3 and Ariadne plan to release an updated 2nd Edition. **By Parkinson and Bolley, £13.95.**

AmigaBASIC

For the out-and-out beginner there is only one book to go for, Compute!'s *Elementary AmigaBASIC* (£14.95), although you might be better off sticking to the manual and buying a more advanced book on the language.

Something like *AmigaBASIC Inside & Out* will do nicely. It is a massive book with zillions of example listings, some of them fairly large projects. Good value. **By Rugheimer and Spanik, Abacus, £18.95.**

If you feel you want more, or are proficient enough already but want a few ideas, *Advanced AmigaBASIC* from Compute! will provide you with some inspiration. **By Halfhill and Brannon, £18.95.**

C

C: A Dabhand Guide, again by Mark Burgess, teaches standard C to a good level, assuming no previous knowledge, and then goes on to explain the peculiarities of Amiga C. At 500+ pages it is good value and an excellent primer to more advanced techniques. **Dabs Press, £14.95.**

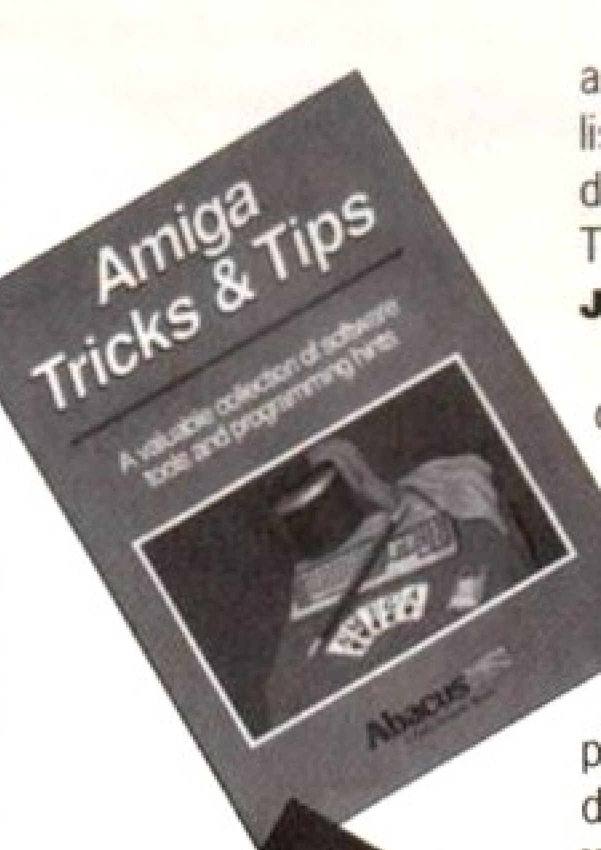
Abacus's *Amiga C for Beginners* is an alternative. It is totally Amiga-specific, but goes a bit quickly for a first book on the language. Not for the total beginner, but a good second book. **By Dirk Schaun, £18.45.**

Once you are reasonably proficient with C, you are ready for the big time. Even at £32.45, Abacus' *Amiga C for Advanced Programmers* is good valu. It dives straight in at the deep end and doesn't come up for air until you know Intuition backwards, paving the way for you to design your own professional-looking C projects. **By Bleek, Jennrich and Schulz.**

Machine Code

For the newcomer to assembler, Abacus's *Amiga Machine Language* is easy to get into, although it will help if you have programmed in another machine language before. After a short refresher course it takes you from a first simple program, through the hardware registers, on to the operating system and Intuition. **By Stefan Dittrich, £14.95.**

If you want examples and explanations of advanced code, there's nothing – except the *Hardware Reference Manual*, of course.



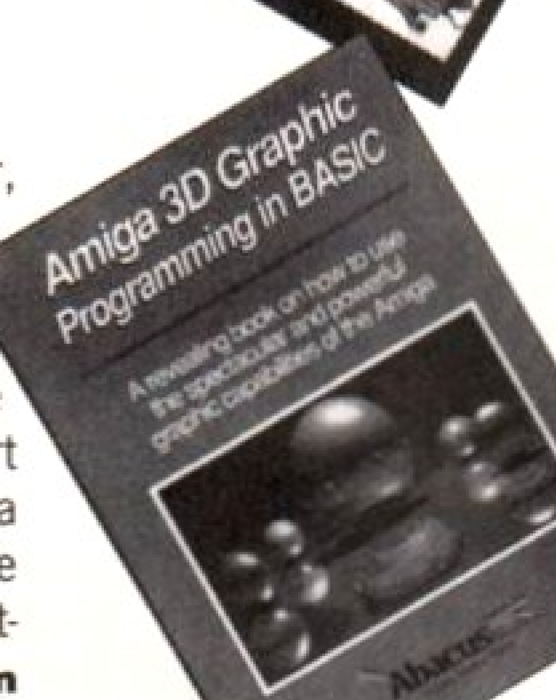
Desktop Video

Poorly supported on the bookshelf. There are two books, one from Compute! and the other from Abacus. Both were written for the US market and at the price, neither is good enough to recommend. *Amiga Desktop Video* **by Steven Anzovin, Compute!, £18.45** and *Amiga Desktop Video Guide* **by Guy Wright, Abacus, £18.45.**

Graphics

If you're into graphics programming, then you're in luck – Abacus has published two books just for you: *Amiga 3D Graphic Programming in BASIC* and *Amiga Graphics Inside & Out*. About half of the 3D graphics book is an excellent, albeit slow, ray-tracer listing. The other half goes into great depth about rendering techniques. The results are stunning. **By Jennrich and Massman, £18.45.**

Inside & Out concentrates more on standard Amiga graphics, from lines to sprites, Intuition to the copper, fonts to screen dumps. Half the book's 600 pages cover AmigaBASIC, a further 200 pages are for C programmers, plus there is a 100 page appendix documenting library functions. **By Weltner, Trapp, Jennrich, £32.45.**



Desktop Publishing

There are no Amiga-specific books on the subject, but DTP techniques are much the same anywhere so any general DTP book is going to be useful. Don't waste your money on anything under £15 unless it's called *The Desktop Publishing Book* by Peter Warlock (Heinemann, £12.95) and, if you can afford it, go for *Desktop Publishing & Typesetting* from Kleper and published by Tab (£28.15).

Telecommunications

If you are using your Amiga on a phone, you simply must get hold of a copy of the *New Hacker's Handbook*. It will open your eyes. It commits no crimes, but it may help prevent some. Get it. **By Cornwall and Gold, Century, £9.99.**

Learning how to use your Amiga is much the same as trying to fix your own car, or learning how to cook: some people seem to pick it up through trial and experience, others go off to a local night school, while the vast majority rely on garages and fast food.

To save you all the trouble of hopping off to your local educational institution you can now get your very own home tutor, who will sit patiently with you in your own front room while you get to grips with your Amiga and all its paraphernalia.

Most people loathe ploughing through instruction manuals, so even a simple book on the workings of an Amiga is not particularly beneficial. Not only is it mind-numbingly boring, but also it lacks an interactive quality. The question is, can a video overcome this dilemma?

Little by Little

Here we have a step-by-step guide to your Amiga which will take you right through from setting up to Workbench, the CLI, printers and viruses, beginning with the basics: plugging in your mouse – even explaining that if you run out of table while moving across the screen, you don't have to go find another table but simply pick the mouse up and place it down somewhere else on the table. "Simple – isn't it?"

The video is divided up into five sections and has that 'dip-in and dip-out' quality, so if you feel somewhat patronised by being told "This is a mouse" you can hit the remote-control zapper and wind on.

The range of topics covered over an hour and a half is wide and, above all, practical. The video helps you to learn the things you will actually need to know – how to set up a printer, what a RAM expansion is and does – rather than vague theories.

Little Problems

Unfortunately the video tends at times to switch from treating you like an absolute novice, which no doubt the majority of people using the video will be, to making a huge assumption that you know something already. This is probably down to the video having been put together by people who, I assume, know a fair amount about the Amiga and so accidentally a few technical terms slip out without the (sadly somewhat monotonous) narrator explaining what they are.

An "unformatted disk" is not explained and the term "ghosted menu" is used but is not explained until later on. These may sound trivial points to the Amiga buff, but I'm sure you can think back to your childhood days and remember how frustrated and left out you felt when you didn't understand a particular word – you remember the ones – that all your mates used quite happily.

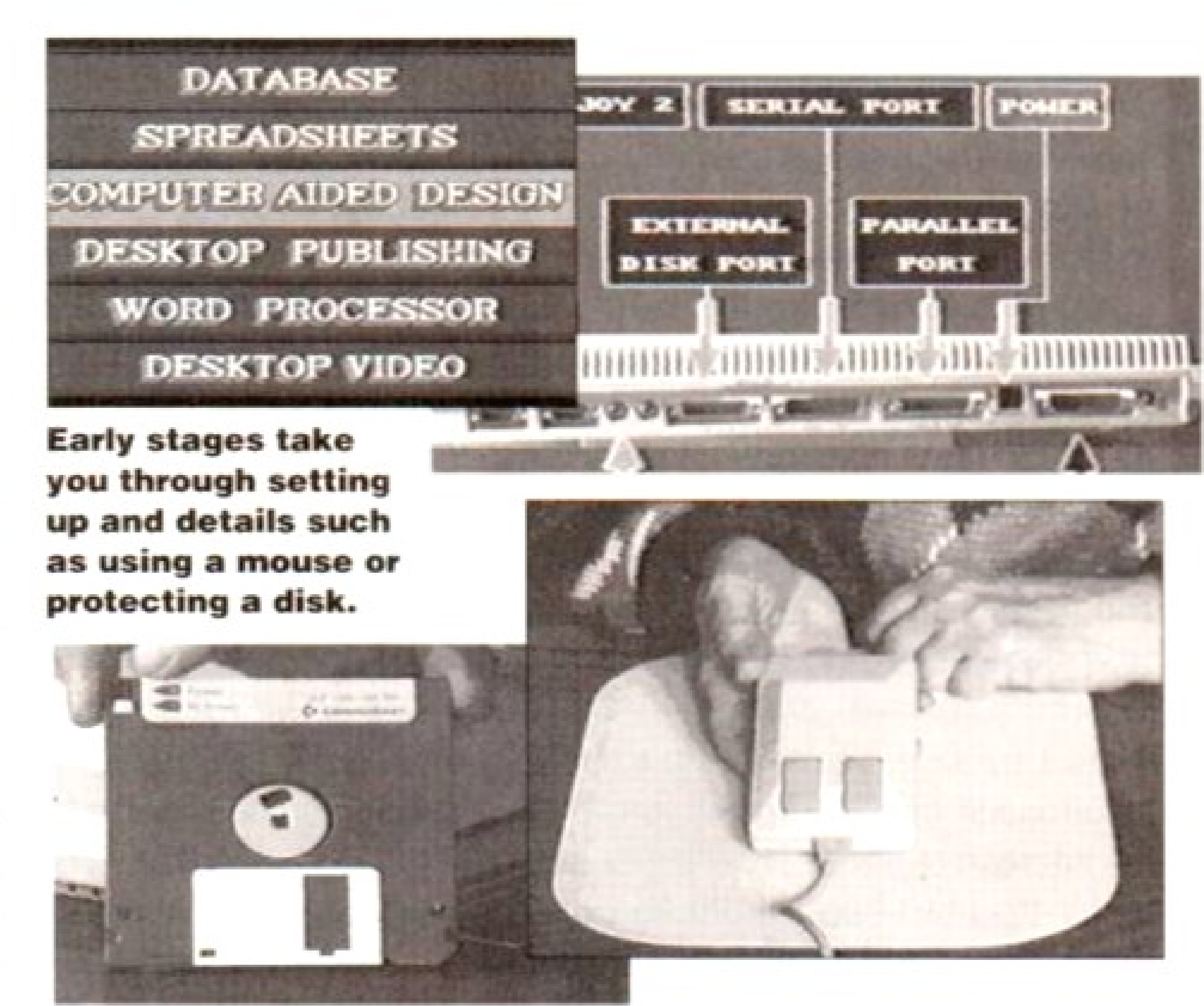
One thing that seems to be missing is the actual tutor. What frightens many people about computers is the fact they are something non-human. The video does not quite manage to counteract this basic hang-up – throughout the hour and thirty minutes you do not see a single human face – although the voice of the female narrator is a friendly one.

Finally, the production quality could do with a bit of tweaking. Using a Genlock, procedures taking place on the Amiga screen have been dumped straight to tape, which is excellent and directly relevant: but some of the sound dubbing has been a little messy and could do with tidying up. A clean, professional-looking production would encourage that bit more trust in the user.

Strengths

When the video breaks away from just going through, step-by-step, the commands and directions of how to get into the Utilities drawer, or make a back-up copy of your Workbench (all of which are very useful), is where the tutorial is at its best.

Overall, the *Tutor Video* will tell you a lot of things you need to know and do it in an accessible way. It's a great help once you grasp the concept that computers are an up-date of fairly ordinary concepts – typewriters, filing cabinets, paint brushes – and it's the diagrams and animations used in the video which explain most simply the concept behind Windows, how the CLI works and what a Virus actually is. These metaphorical diagrams are excellent and hopefully will be used more in the sequel. After all, as the saying goes, "a picture DPaints a thousand words."

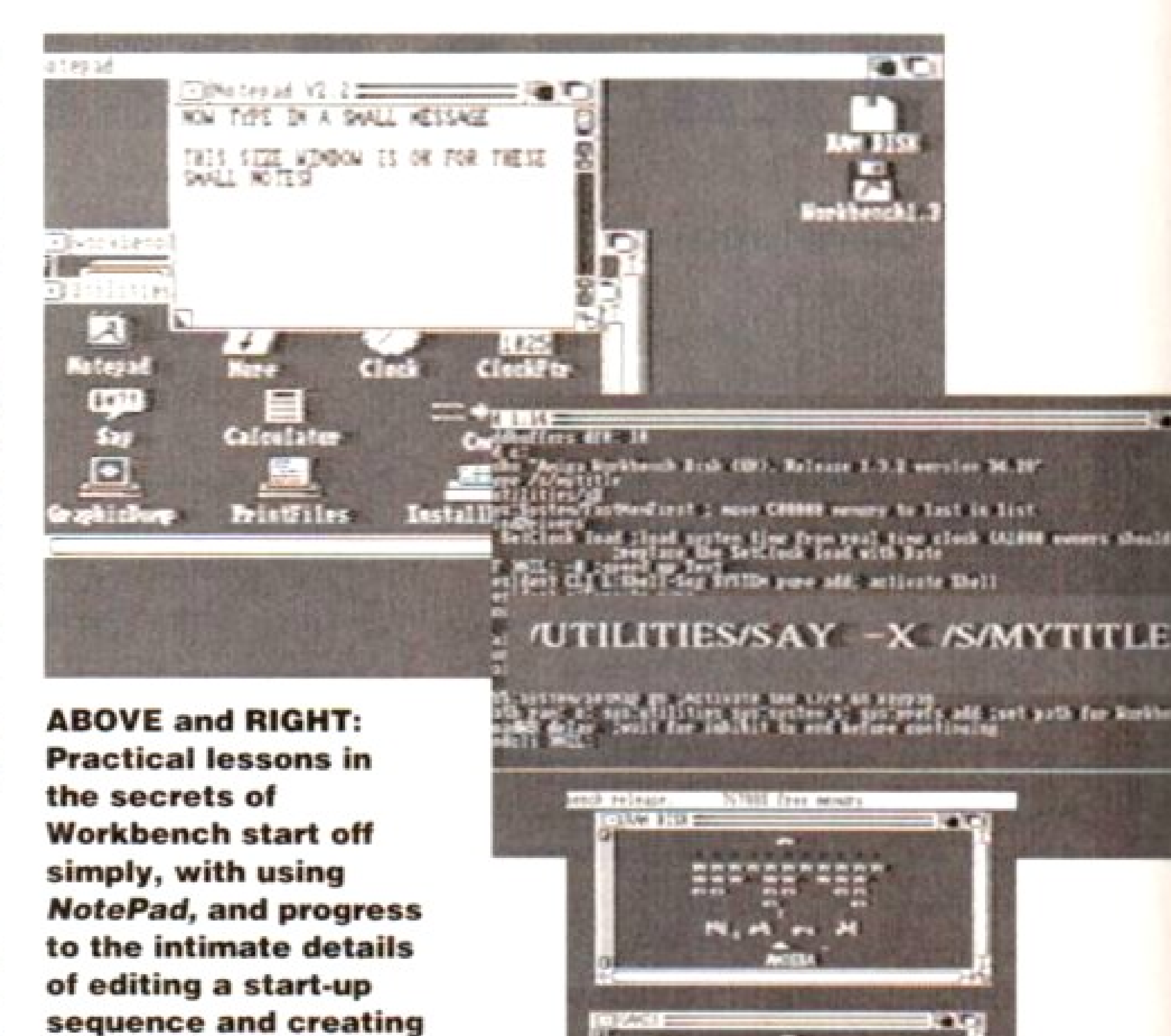


Early stages take you through setting up and details such as using a mouse or protecting a disk.

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ABOVE and RIGHT: Practical lessons in the secrets of Workbench start off simply, with using *NotePad*, and progress to the intimate details of editing a start-up sequence and creating a self-booting disk to contain PD games.

BELOW: At the end of the video, technical info such as how to set up your printer in Preferences and how to fit a RAM expansion in 22 seconds appears!

VERDICT

PURPOSE
To teach a new user the tricky parts of the Amiga in a simple, accessible way.

SPEED: N/A

DOCUMENTATION: N/A

ACCESSIBILITY: GOOD
A video is a better way of presenting this information than a dull, dry manual.

VALUE: AVERAGE
A few tweaks to the production quality would make a lot of difference.

FEATURES: EXCELLENT
Sensibly, it teaches you about the most practical areas – the ones you will need.



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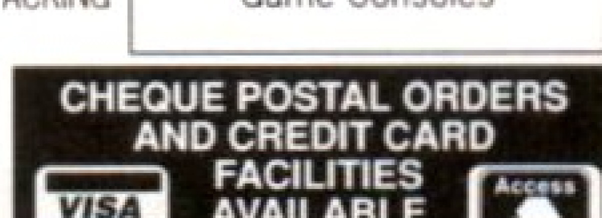
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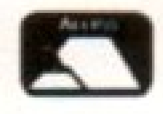
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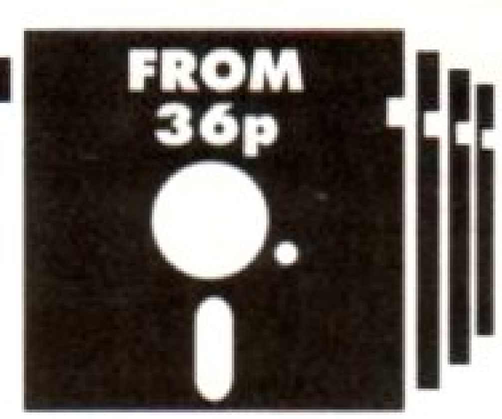
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RULES

Employees of Future Publishing and US Gold are not allowed to enter. The judges' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Anyone who doesn't like it will be stood up against a wall and shot because we don't stand for any of that nonsense round here, thank you very much.

QUESTIONS

1. What colour (usually) are fire engines?
a) Spring peach orange
b) Barley apple white
c) Fire Engine Red

2. Which of these messages might you find on a fire alarm?
a) Light blue touch paper then retire
b) In emergency, break glass
c) Please fondle my button, I'm Hungarian

3. Where might you find a firing pin?
a) In a map
b) In a gun
c) Along with your P45 from the boss

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QUESTIONS

1. What does Mondrian's art look like?
a) The M25 on a busy day
b) Rectangles and squares composed of the primary colours
c) A lot of Pollocks

2. Who was quoted as saying that everyone would be famous for 15 minutes?
a) Andy Warhol
b) Anonymous
c) The Norwegian group who got 0 points in the Eurovision song contest

3. Who said "all art is quite useless"?
a) Winnie the Pooh
b) Oscar Wilde
c) Not me matey, that's for sure

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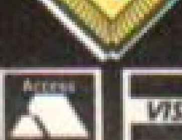
A590 Upgrade chips: 1/2Mb **£34**, 1Mb **£62**, 2Mb **£120**

SIMM's. All types available. Call for pricing.
A3000 4 Mbit Static Column Dram call for pricing.

All prices include VAT and postage & packaging. Prices may be subject to change without notice. All products carry a 12 month guarantee. Dealer enquiries are welcome.

CORTEX products are marketed in the U.K. by Memory Expansion Systems Ltd. Britannia Buildings, 46 Fenwick Street, Liverpool L2 7NB. Tel. (051) 236 0480. Fax: (051) 227 2482. Make cheques payable to M.E.S. Ltd.





The Games of the Year

With a quick show of hands and a rustle of ballot papers, it's official: the Amiga Format Gold of Golds has been decided. The software houses are waiting eagerly in the wings, sweaty palms at the ready to clutch the ultimate Amiga games award. And, not in reverse order, the winner is...

1 RAINBOW ISLANDS Ocean FG 95%
The classic coin-op island hop. Sickeningly cute and fiendishly difficult. Bub is boss.

2 CAPTIVE Mindscape FG 91%
Dungeon Master with laser cannon and 1000s of levels. Remote control robots on the rampage. Simply spiffy.

3 INDY 500 Electronic Arts FG 92%
Incredibly fast car capers on the US motor circuit. Flexible set-ups and appalling computer drivers make for motor mayhem.

4 KICK OFF II Anco FG 94%
The little people in striped jerseys make a comeback: this time with free kicks, substitutes and yet more useless goalies (well, Maff's always are. Or so he says).

5 TOWER OF BABEL MicroProse FG 95%
Robots get serious trying to phone home. A towering success.

6 OP STEALTH US Gold FG 90%
Super spy guy Glames – John Glames – in a superb graphic adventure.

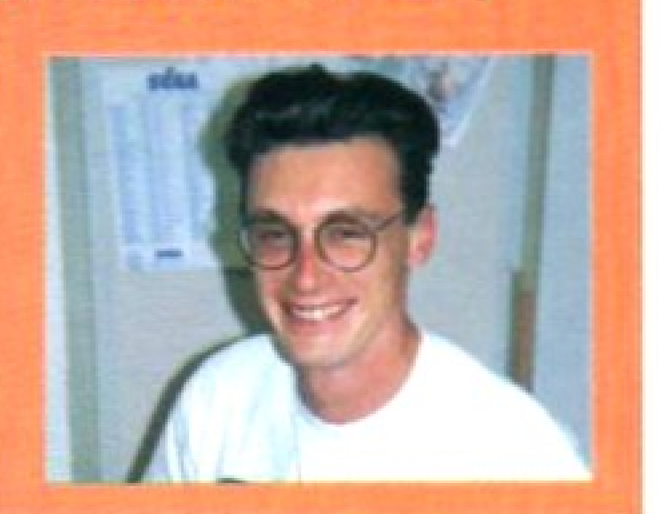
7 THEIR FINEST HOUR US Gold FG 90%
Dagah, dagah, dagah. Fun with Spits and Bogies in WWII.

8 KILLING GAME SHOW Pysgnosis FG 92%
Futuristic TV's final solution in the ratings war.

9 MIDWINTER Rainbird FG 92%
Global warming goes seriously wrong in this epic adventure.

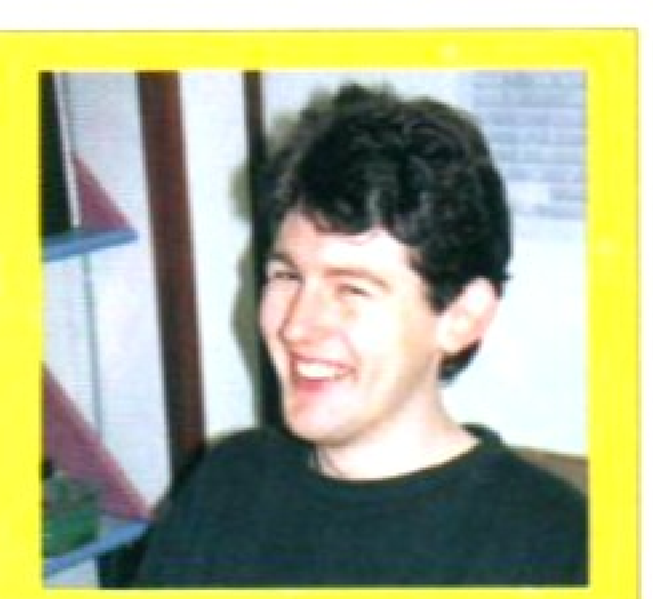
10 SUPREMACY Virgin FG 90%
Galactic empire-building and the single man. Fun but tough.

ANDY SMITH ESQ, EX-REVIEWS ED (NOW EDITOR OF SEGA POWER)



1. Rainbow Islands
2. Their Finest Hour
3. Kick Off II
4. Captive
5. Conqueror
6. Tower of Babel
7. Indy 500
8. Omega
9. Wipe Out
10. Rick Dangerous II

BOB WADE, EDITOR



1. Rainbow Islands
2. Indy 500
3. Kick Off II
4. Monty Python
5. Wings Of Fury
6. Wipe Out
7. Typhoon Thompson
8. Risk
9. Paradroid '90
10. Pang

'GAZZA' LORD, PRODUCTION MAIN MAN



1. Lotus Esprit Turbo
2. Pang
3. Off Road Racer
4. Indy 500
5. Tetris
6. Lotus Esprit Turbo (again)
7. Coronation Street
8. Brookside
9. Bomber Bob
10. Fog on the Tyne

PAUL MORGAN, ACE DESIGNER



1. Killing Game Show
2. Pick 'n' Pile
3. Rick Dangerous II
4. Shadow of the Beast II
5. Saint Dragon
6. Gremlins II
7. Pang
8. Plotting
9. Venus
10. Monty Python

Shoot-em-up of the Year
Warhead – Activision

Arcade Conversion of the Year
Rainbow Islands – Ocean

Adventure/RPG of the Year
Captive – Mindscape

Sports Sim of the Year
Kick Off II – Anco

Sim of the Year
F-19 Stealth Fighter – MicroProse

Race Game of the Year
Indy 500 – Electronic Arts

Sports Sim of the Year not counting Anco footie games because they always win
Ultimate Golf – Gremlin Graphics

Budget Game of the Year
Jocky Wilson's Darts – Zeppelin

11 F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
MicroProse FG 91%
The technological flight sim for the seriously sneaky.

12 DAMOCLES
Novagen FG 92%
The Mercenary saves the planet Eris from a 'uge great comet.

13 GRAVITY
Mirrorsoft FG 91%
Mind-bending space destruction for the seriously weird.

14 PLAYER MANAGER
Anco FG 93%
Right then, young man!

15 GHOULS AND GHOSTS
US Gold 91%
Bash those ghosts in an arcade romp with spirit(s).

16 AUSTERLITZ
PSS FG 91%
Historical tactical warfare sim with real class.

17 DRAGON'S BREATH
Palace FG 94%
An RPG cult in the making?

18 CONQUEROR
Rainbow Arts FG 94%
A tanking good battle sim.

19 F-29 RETALIATOR
Ocean FG 92%
Ocean get serious for this fully-armed high-flyer.

20 KNIGHTS OF THE CRYSTALLION
US Gold FG 91%
An everyday tale of Knights and their Crystallions.

21 DISTANT ARMIES
Exocet FG 92%
Chess in 10 different flavours!

22 PROJECTYLE
Electronic Arts 90%
Future sport frisbee frolics.

23 HERO'S QUEST
Sierra 92%
Graphic adventure in the mysterious Spielburg Valley.

24 LOOM
US Gold 85%
User-friendly graphic fairytale.

25 WARHEAD
Activision 88%
Strategic shoot-out with style.

26 Lotus Turbo Challenge – Gremlin Graphics 89%
27 Monty Python Spam Simulator – Virgin 88%
28 Castle Master – Domark 89%
29 Turrican – Rainbow Arts 88%
30 Omega – Mindscape 87%
31 Imperium – Electronic Arts 86%
32 Vaxine – US Gold 85%
33 Resolution 101 – Millenium 87%
34 James Pond – Millenium 81%
35 Wings – Mirrorsoft 79%
36 Corporation – Core Design 80%
37 688 Attack Sub – Electronic Arts 86%
38 Fighter Bomber – Activision 87%
39 Herewith The Clues – 80%
40 Pipe Mania – Entertainment International 81%
42 Magic Fly – Electronic Arts 88%
43 Paradroid '90 – Hewson 88%
44 Red Storm Rising – MicroProse 89
45 Skidz – Gremlin Graphics 86%
46 Supercars – Gremlin Graphics 86%
47 Ultimate Golf – Gremlin Graphics 88%
48 Risk – Virgin 85%
49 Murder – US Gold 81%
50 Flood – Electronic Arts 84%
51 Klax – Domark 88%
52 Italy '90 – US Gold 80%
53 Shadow of the Beast II – Pysgnosis 87%
54 Plotting – Ocean 81%
55 Simulcra – Microprose 80%
56 Mean Streets – US Gold 88%
57 Rotox – US Gold 84%
58 Xenomorph – Pandora 83%
59 The Untouchables – Ocean 87%
60 St Dragon – Storm 82%
61 Wings Of Fury – Domark 84%
62 Escape from the Planet of the Robot Monsters – Domark 82%
63 Dragon Force – Interstel 83%
64 Battle Squadron – Electronic Zoo 82%
65 Theme Park Mystery – Mirrorsoft 82%
66 Storm Across Europe – SSI 80%
67 Infestation – Psygnosis 89%
68 Wipe Out – Gonzo Games 85%
69 Betrayal – Rainbird 84%
70 Team Yankee – Entertainment International 81%
71 The Island of Lost Hope – Digital Concepts 80%
72 Helter Skelter – Audiogenic 87%
73 Demon's Tomb – Virgin 80%
74 The Cycles – Accolade 84%
75 Typhoon Thompson – Domark 80%
76 Tennis Cup – Loriciels 83%
77 Thunderstrike – Millennium 77%
78 Pang – Ocean 87%
79 The Immortal – Electronic Arts 78%
80 Spy Who loved Me – Domark 80%
81 Battlemaster – PSS 83%
82 X-Out – Rainbow Arts 78%
83 Jumping Jack Son – Infogrames 81%
84 P-47 – MicroProse 80%
85 Overlander – Elite 81%
86 Rotor – Arcana 80%
87 Op Thunderbolt – Ocean 88%
89 Cadaver – Mirrorsoft 83%
90 Time Machine – Activision 85%
91 Hammerfist – Activision 89%
92 Gold of the Aztecs – US Gold 73%
93 Lost Patrol – Ocean 79%
94 It Came From The Desert – Mirrorsoft 80%
95 Chase HQ – Ocean 82%
96 Turn it – Kingsoft 83%
97 Ghost and Goblins – Elite 80%
98 Fire and Brimstone – MicroProse 81%
99 Xiphos – Electronic Z00 80%
100 Wolfpack – Mirrorsoft 80%

This chart is purely the opinion of the Reviews Editor. Any omissions, errors or blatant inaccuracies will be blamed on the cleaners.

PAT 'THE CAT' MACDONALD, TECH' ED



Captive	1
Turrican	2
Klax	3
Hero's Quest	4
F-19 Stealth Fighter	5
M1 Tank Platoon	6
Rick Dangerous II	7
Lemmings Demo AF18 (!!!)	8
Shadow of the Beast II	9
Their Finest Hour	10

TRENTON WEBB, REVIEWS ED



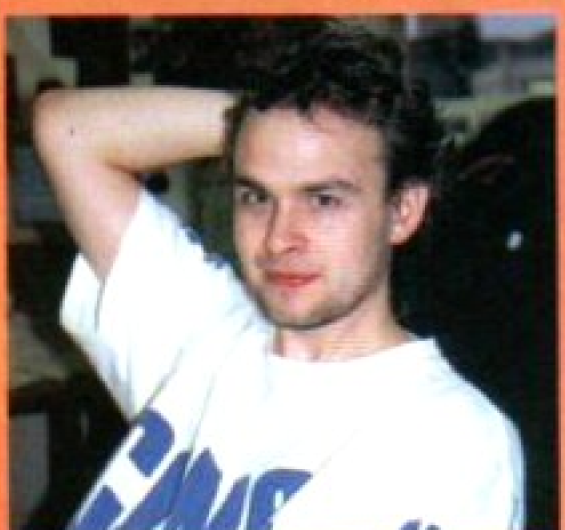
Captive	1
F-19 Stealth Fighter	2
Operation Stealth	3
Supremacy	4
Powermonger	5
Wings	6
Golden Axe	7
Killing Game Show	8
Red Storm Rising	9
Rick Dangerous II	10

MARCUS 'DR' DYSON



Rainbow Islands	1
Pang	2
Flood	3
Puzznic	4
Plotting	5
Pipe Mania	6
Resolution 101	7
James Pond	8
Helter Skelter	9
E-Motion	10

MAFF EVANS, STAFF WRITER AND BOOK AUTHOR



Rainbow Islands	1
Damocles	2
Killing Game Show	3
Warhead	4
Tower of Babel	5
Kick Off II	6
Lemmings Demo AF 18	7
Rick Dangerous II	8
Infestation	9
F-29 Retaliator	10

DAMIEN NOONAN, DEPUTY EDITOR

Kick Off II	1
Pang	2
Lemmings Demo AF 18	3
Ghouls and Ghosts	4
Pipe Mania	5
Rainbow Islands	6
Er...	7
That's it... (Dep Ed!)	8

Most played Games in the Format Office

Pang (183.5 man-hours – Marcus/Bob)
Kick Off II (126.3 Mh – Everybody)
Wings of Fury (110 Mh – Marcus/Maff/Bob)
Lemmings Demo (93.6 Mh – Pat/Maff)
Indy 500 (400 Mh and counting – Bob)
F-19 (223 Mh – Trenton)
Captive (234.6 and still only on base 8 – Trenton + members of *ST* and *Commodore Format*)
Wings (98.456 Mh – Trenton)
St Dragon (75.36 Mh – Maff, but he made Level 5)



THIRD COAST TECHNOLOGIES

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Hard Drives For The A500 & A2000

Xetec A500

- Xetec hard drives offer the ultimate in terms of performance for the Amiga A500
- Faster than any other competitor
- Transfer rates of upto 800K/S
- Supports tape backup & networking under SCSI
- Support of up to 8Mbytes of auto-configuring ram
- Compact host adapter with 1 metre connection cable
- Comes complete with 40 management utilities & manual



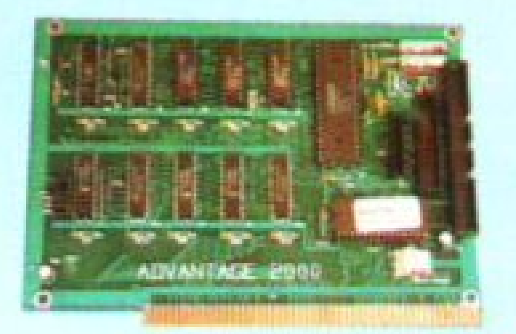
Faster Than Any Other Competitor "Amiga Computing"

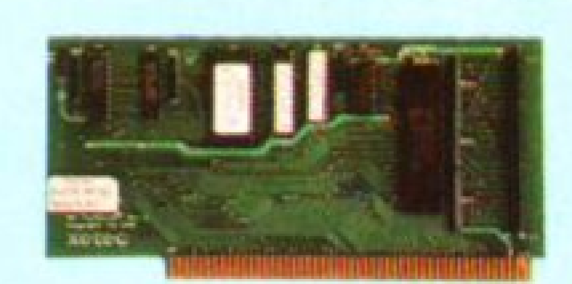
Xetec A500 Hard Drive & Ram Pricing

Xetec 50MB 25 Milli Head Park.	£599.99	Xetec Ram	£129.99
Xetec 65MB 25 Milli Head Park.	£699.99	Xetec 1.5MB	£229.99
Xetec 85MB 25 Milli Head Park.	£799.99	Xetec 2MB	£349.99
Xetec 106MB 15 Milli Head Park.	£999.99	Xetec 4MB	£499.99
Xetec 330MB 15 Milli Head Park.	£1999.00	Xetec 8MB	£999.99

ICD ADV 2000 Hard Drives

Advantage 2000 SCSI performance hard drive controller. Supports transfer rates of up to 900K/S. Fully autobooting supporting all embedded SCSI drives & SCSI/ST506 controllers. The ADV controller also supports optical drives, tape streamers & removable media drives. Cache buffering & 20 nanosecond GAL logic make this the fastest controller commercially available for the Amiga 2000 series. Programmable memory cache buffering is also available. ADV will support a drive in the landing bay or on the side of the card.





ADV 2000 Controller £129.99

ICD ADV 2000 Hard Drive Pricing

22MB 25 M/S auto head park & lock	£349.99	32MB 25 M/S auto head park & lock	£399.99
50MB 25 M/S auto head park & lock	£449.99	65MB 25 M/S auto head park & lock	£549.99
85MB 25 M/S auto head park & lock	£599.99	106MB 15 M/S auto head park & lock	£699.99
330MB 15 M/S auto head park & lock	£1999.99	ST506 controller (MFM & RLL)	£99.99

IVS Trumpcard



- Supports all embedded hard drives
- supports up to 4Mbytes of fast ram
- 2-3 times faster than the A590
- Autoboot roms as standard, uses fastfile
- Compact design clips into side of Amiga A500
- Memory expandable in 512K, 1MB, 2MB steps
- Unique design allows controller & drive to be used with an Amiga 2000 should you ever upgrade
- Supports any 3.5" SCSI drive

32MB Trumpcard 25 Milli Auto Park A500.	£399.99	Trumpcard Kit.	£199.99
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106MB Trumpcard 25 Milli Auto Park A500.	£799.99	Meta 4 - 4MB	£499.99

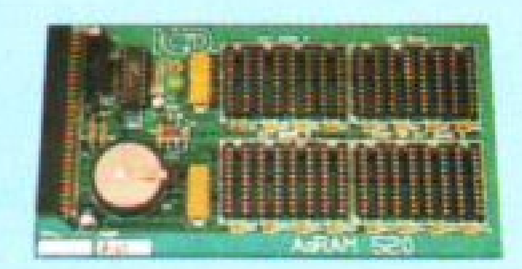
16MHz Accelerator

16MHz 68000 turbo accelerator for the A500 and A2000. Offers minimum 95% speed increase across the board on all software. Fully compatible & unlike a 68020 a fraction of the cost

£299.99

68030 Accelerators lowest prices call for details

Ram Expansions



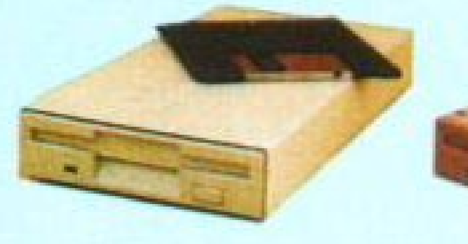
ICD AdRAM A500

ICD AdRAM for the A500 offers memory expansion from 512K to 1MB then by adding 4 chips it expands to 1.5MB etc. The board comes supplied with comprehensive manual and clock. It takes only minutes to install & requires no soldering. Available in any configuration. Plugs in A501 expansion slot.

AdRAM 540 unpopulated.	£79.99	AdRAM 540 with 2MB.	£169.99
AdRAM 540 with 1/2MB.	£89.99	AdRAM 540 with 2.5MB.	£199.99
AdRAM 540 with 1MB.	£109.99	AdRAM 540 with 3.5MB.	£299.99
AdRAM 540 with 1.5MB.	£124.99	AdRAM 540 with 4.5MB.	£339.99

Amiga Floppy Drives

Internal floppy drive requires no case modification
external 84 track slimline drive with cable & switch





Internal Floppy. £59.99 External Floppy. £59.99



1/2MB Upgrade Board With Clock Only £44.99

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ICD AdRAM 2000 offering support of up to 8MB fully auto configuring ram. Upgradable in stages of 2,4,6 and 8 megabytes uses standard 1*1 Drams. Slots simply into any A2000 card. Supplied with ram checker disk and manual.

AdRAM A2000 Unpopulated.	£149.99	AdRAM A2000 2MB installed.	£284.99
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AdRAM A2000 8MB installed.	£899.99		

All prices are subject to change without notice.

Graphics

Pro Genlocks

£249.99

Pro-Genlock offering video in & out, RGB & PAL out. Built in fader. External colour & contrast controls. Suplied with manual and features that leave the Rendale standing







GST Gold Genlock

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Pro-Genlock with built in PSU, built in RGB splitter. Video in & out also RGB & PAL out. Built in key inverter. Allows digitised results to be stored and overlayed onto any VHS recorder. Title and animate any video.

X-Specs 3D

£99.99

X-Specs 3D glasses. Allowing 3D images on your Amiga. Supplied to modify existing games & applications. A must for CAD & Digitising software.



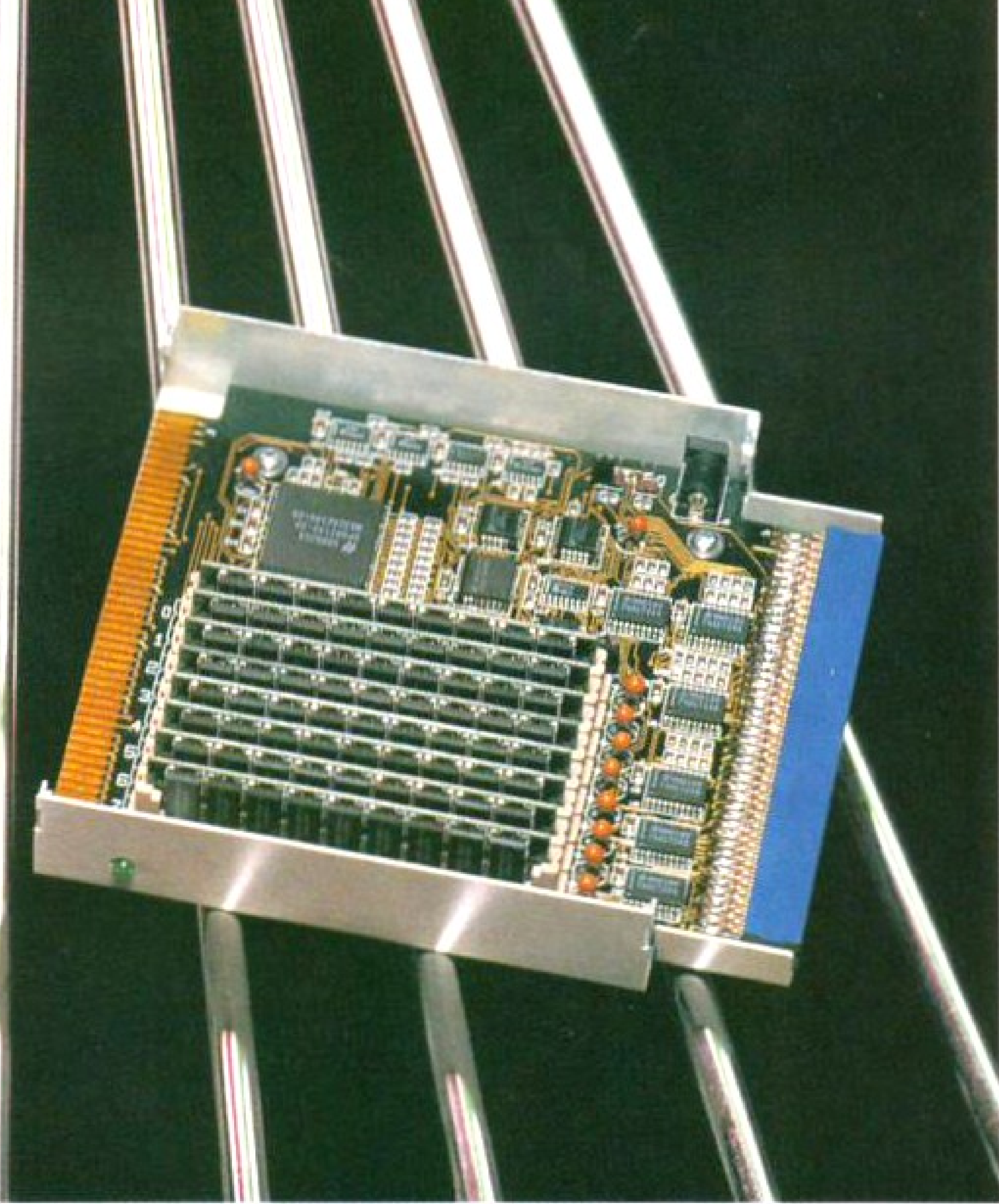



ENTER FIRST INTO BATTLE... LAST TO LEAVE
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Battle
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Set in the near future, as an alternative reality, BATTLE COMMAND is an arcade/strategy game in which the player controls a single "MAULER" Assault Tank in one of 16 scenarios (missions) in the ultra war, fought between two dominant races in the NEW WORLD. The latest phase of the North/South war has been going on for over 10 years, with a stalemate eventually developing - a standoff between armies massed over a long dug-in battlefront. Such are the defensive capabilities of each side, full scale attacks are suicidal, so any offensive moves are, by necessity, small "behind the lines" actions performed by elite troops in specially designed vehicles. The Mauler is the latest such machine - capable of being lifted in and out of hostile territory by fast stealth choppers and armed with the most advanced weaponry the Northern scientists can devise.
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EXPAND YOUR POTENTIAL

Win a gigantic 8-Meg Cortex memory expansion and 2 half-Meg boards, worth over £700.





The Cortex memory expansion is a really neat piece of kit: in Issue 16 we said of it "What a joy! This really is a memory expansion and a half." The only drawback was the price, so what better competition prize to give away than a Cortex with the full eight Meg of memory and throw in two other half-Meg boards as well.

The boards all work with the A500, the Cortex fits on the left-hand expansion port while the half-Meg boards fit in the expansion slot underneath the keyboard. The Cortex comes with its own power supply and a through port so that other peripherals can be plugged in as well.

All you need to do to have a crack at winning these boards is answer the ludicrously easy questions below and get your entry off to us ASAP...

HOW TO ENTER

Write the answers to the following three questions on the back of a postcard or stuck-down envelope and send it to: Big is Beautiful Comp, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. The entries should reach us by 14th January and don't forget to include your name, address and phone number on the postcard.

RULES

Employees of Future Publishing and Memory Expansion Systems are not allowed to enter. The judges' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

QUESTIONS

1. What does RAM stand for?
a) Run A Muck
b) Really Awful Memory
c) Random Access Memory

2. Exactly how many beans make five?
a) 5
b) A piece of string
c) The chicken

3. Where else would you find a cortex?
a) In the brain
b) On an easy-clean carpet
c) Up the exhaust pipe of a Formula One car

GRAB A GRABBER

Win one of 20 Action Replay II cartridges – worth £1200 total

The Action Replay II cartridge is the latest edition of this handy device that allows you to freeze software and rummage around inside the memory looking at the graphics, listening to the sound effects and even tracking down infinite lives. We've got 20 of these fascinating devices from Datel Electronics that have to find a good home – and it could be yours.

The cartridge is packed with many features: like virus detection, a slow motion mode, picture and music editors that allow you to tinker with programs to your heart's content. Normally it would cost you £60 for the A500 version of the cartridge, but we've got 20 of them for free, absolutely no charge. All you have to do to stand a chance of getting one is answer three simple questions...



HOW TO ENTER

Write the answers to the following three questions on the back of a postcard or stuck-down-envelope and send it to: Grabbed by the Dongles Comp, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. The entries should reach us by 14th January and don't forget to include your name, address and phone number on the postcard.

RULES

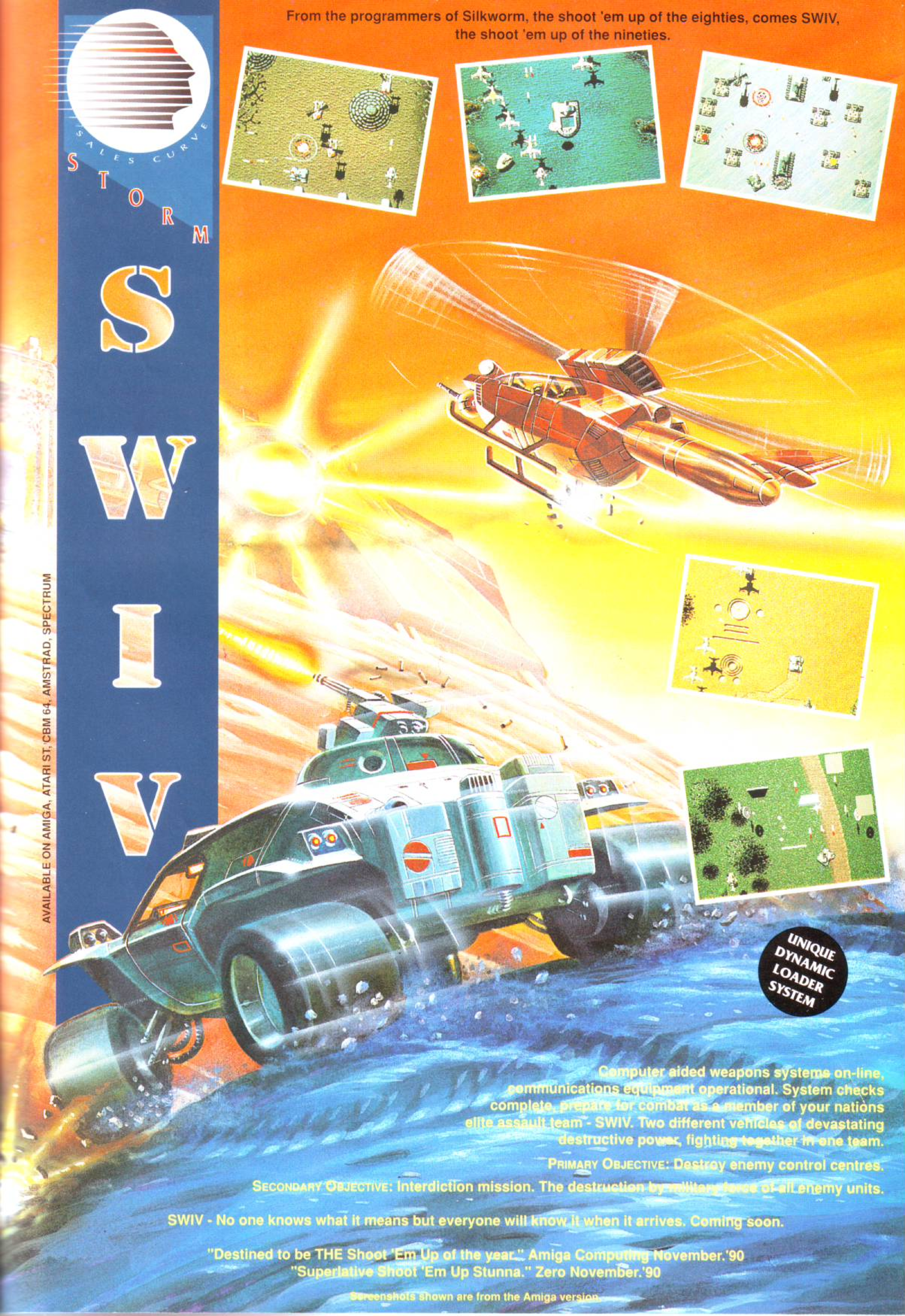
Employees of Future Publishing and Datel Electronics are not allowed to enter. The judges' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

QUESTIONS

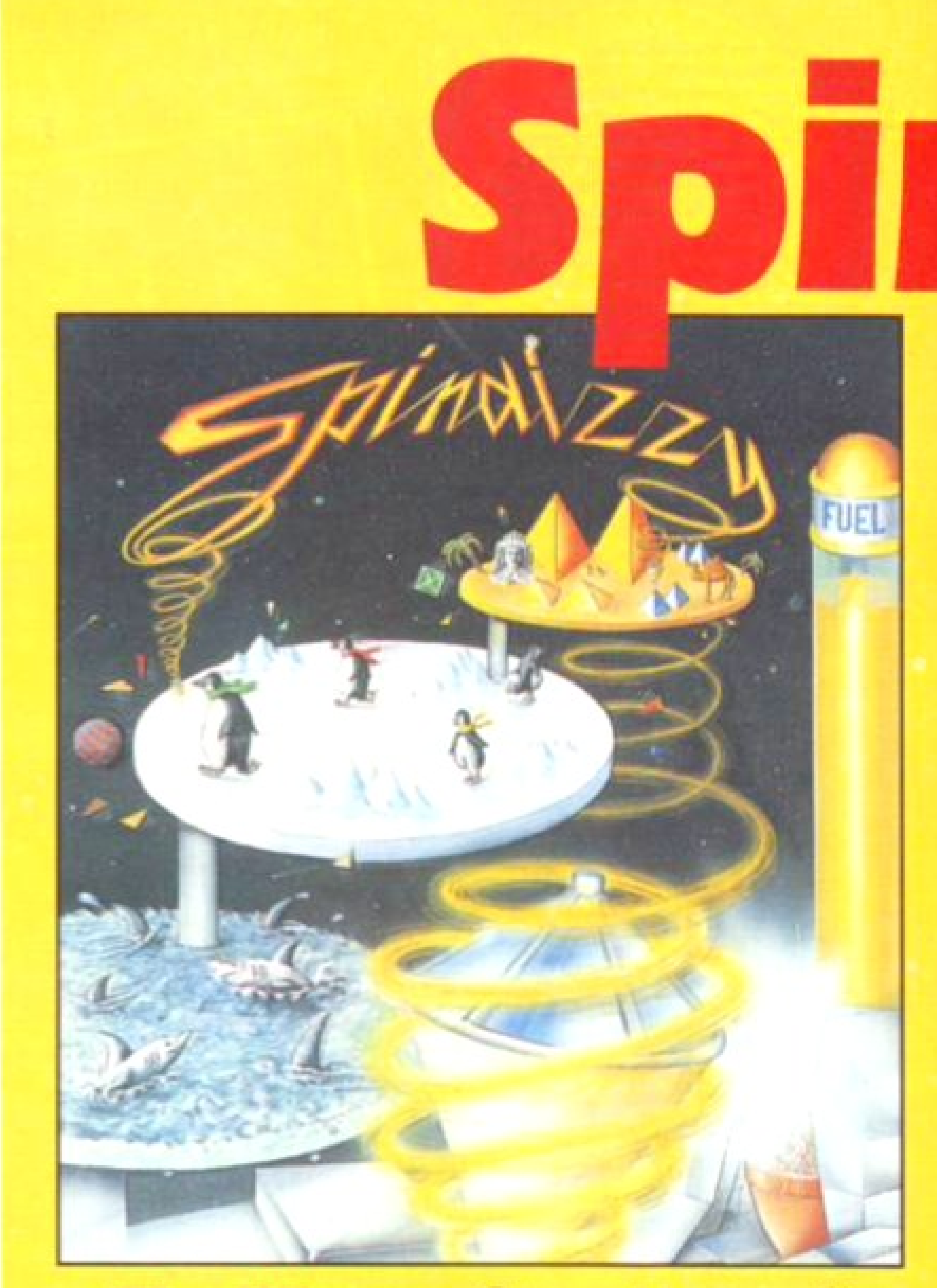
1. At what temperature does water freeze?
a) 0 centigrade
b) 100 centigrade
c) 451 fahrenheit

2. What is an eight-track?
a) A British Rail buffet car
b) A useless old system that was supposed to be the next big thing in music
c) An ammunition clip for a water pistol.

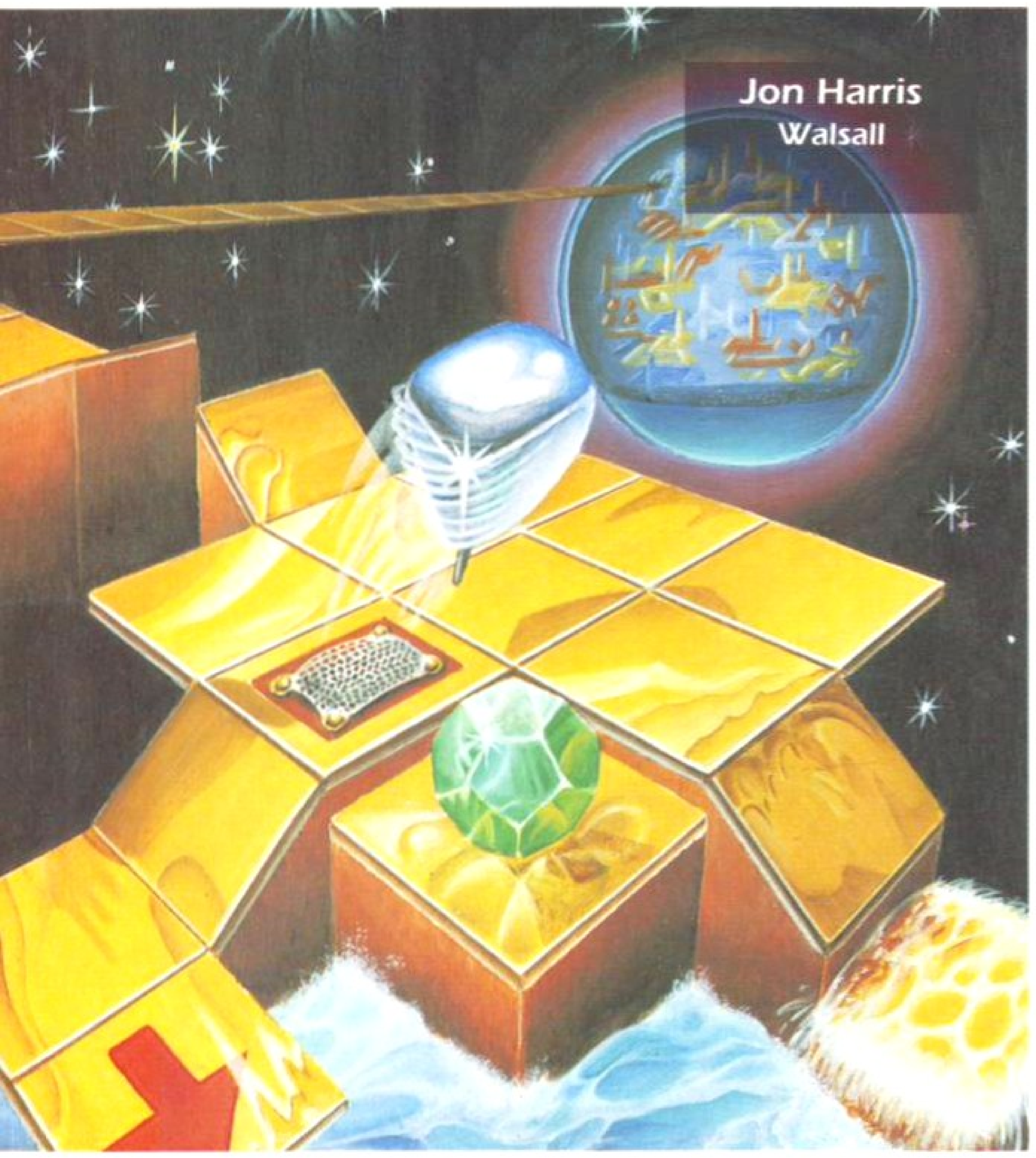
3. Which of these is nearest to the answer Emlyn Hughes would give to a 'What happened next...' question?
a) Pardon?
b) Did you spill my pint?
c) Oooooooooh, aaaaaaaah, I know it, I know it!


From the programmers of Silkworm, the shoot 'em up of the eighties, comes SWIV, the shoot 'em up of the nineties.
SALES CURVE
STORM
SWIV
AVAILABLE ON AMIGA, ATARI ST, CBM 64, AMSTRAD, SPECTRUM
UNIQUE DYNAMIC LOADER SYSTEM
Computer aided weapons systems on-line, communications equipment operational. System checks complete, prepare for combat as a member of your nations elite assault team - SWIV. Two different vehicles of devastating destructive power, fighting together in one team.
PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: Destroy enemy control centres.
SECONDARY OBJECTIVE: Interdiction mission. The destruction by military force of all enemy units.
SWIV - No one knows what it means but everyone will know it when it arrives. Coming soon.
"Destined to be THE Shoot 'Em Up of the year." Amiga Computing November.'90
"Superlative Shoot 'Em Up Stunna." Zero November.'90
Screenshots shown are from the Amiga version.

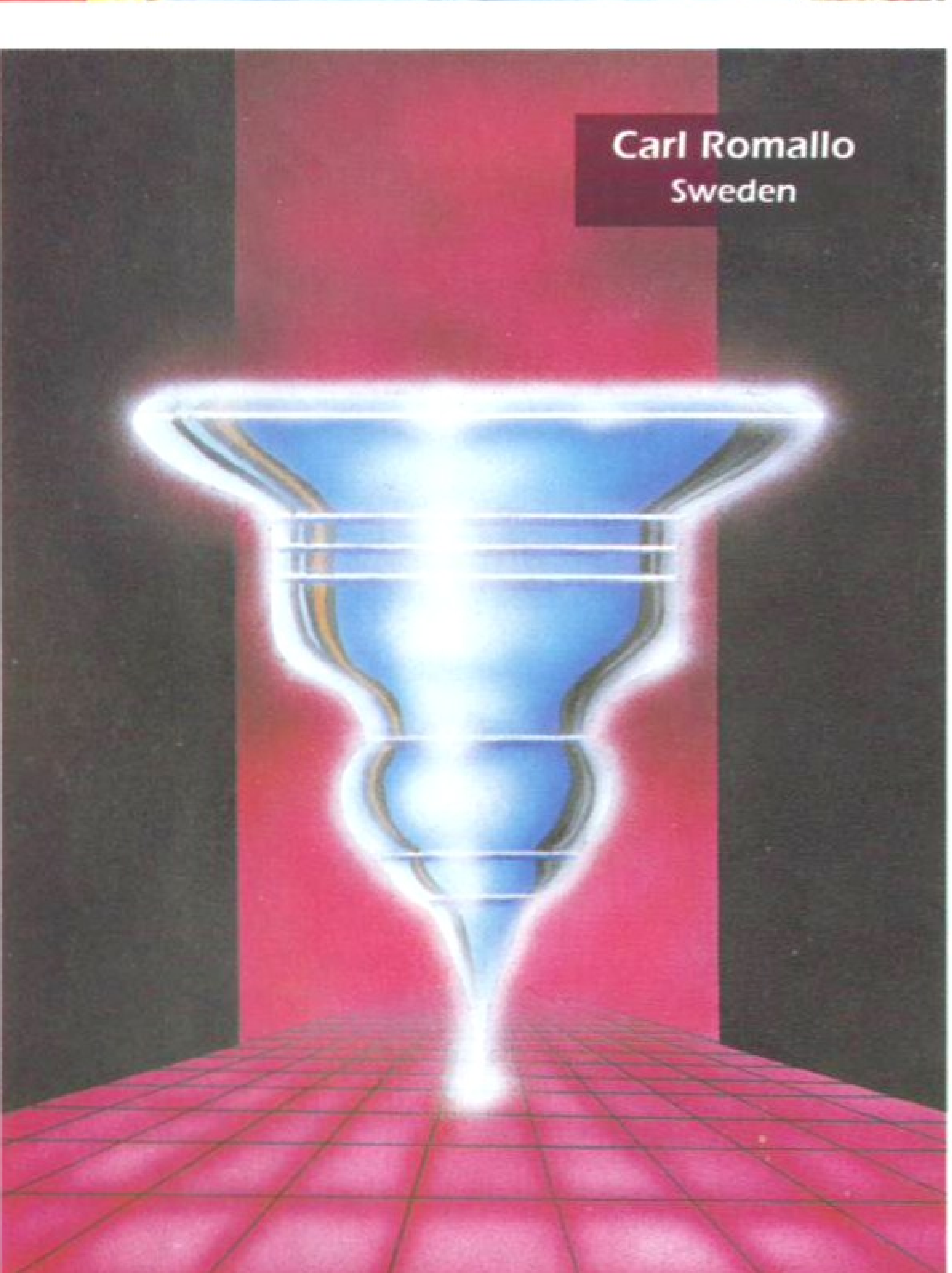
Spin



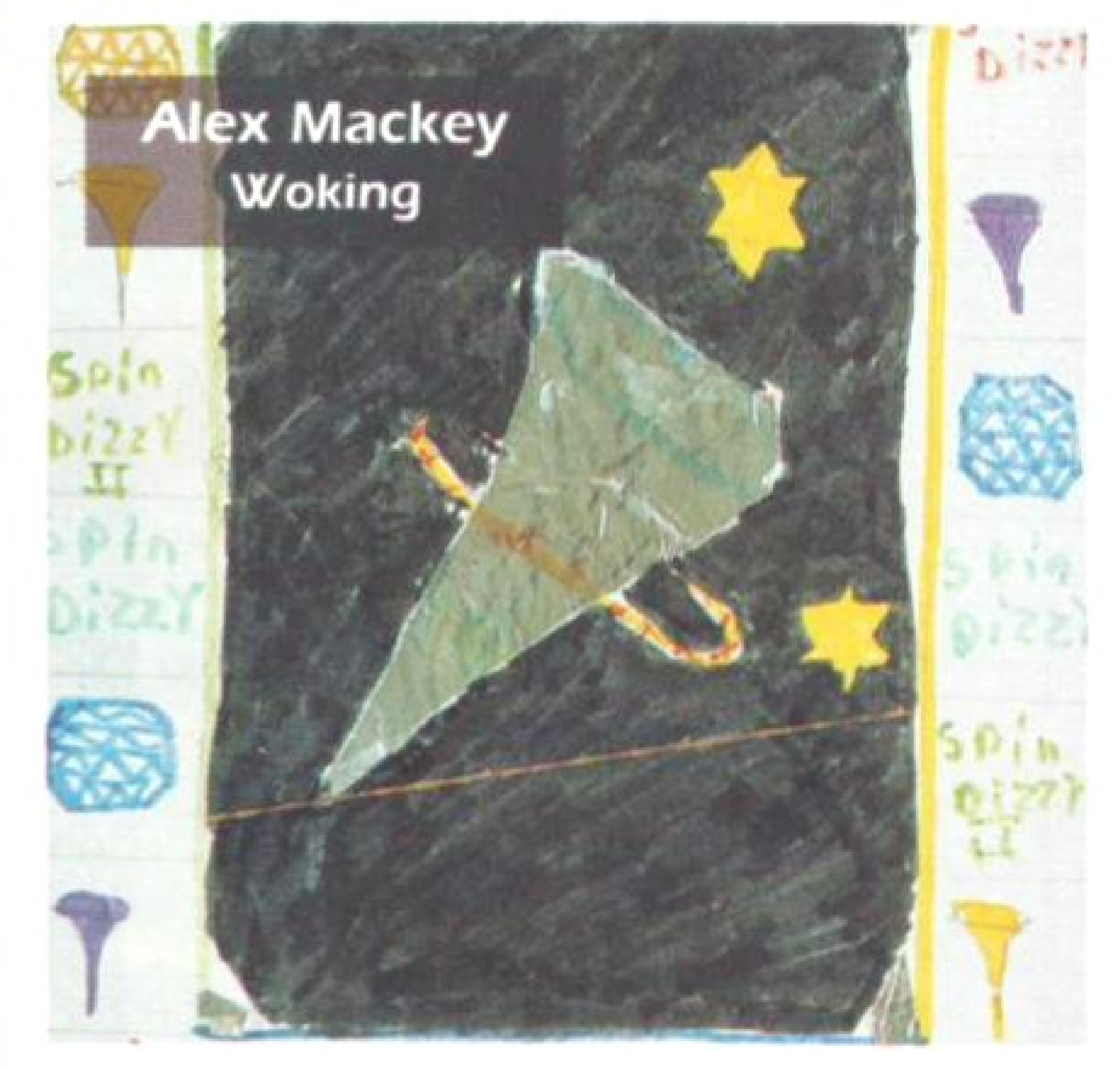
The Winner: Steve Hopcroft
This artwork will be appearing on the packaging of the now renamed Spindizzy Worlds



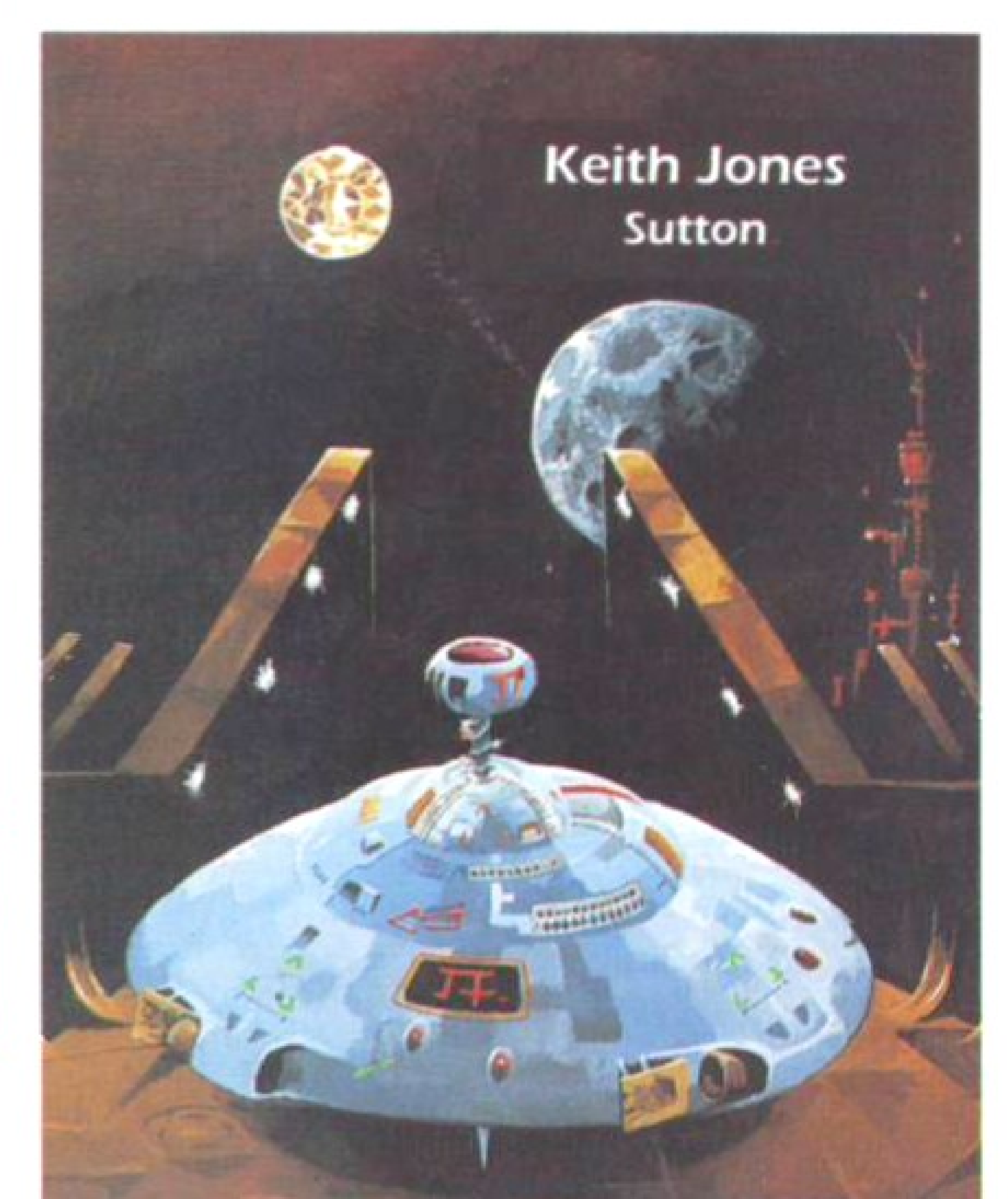
Jon Harris
Walsall



Carl Romallo
Sweden



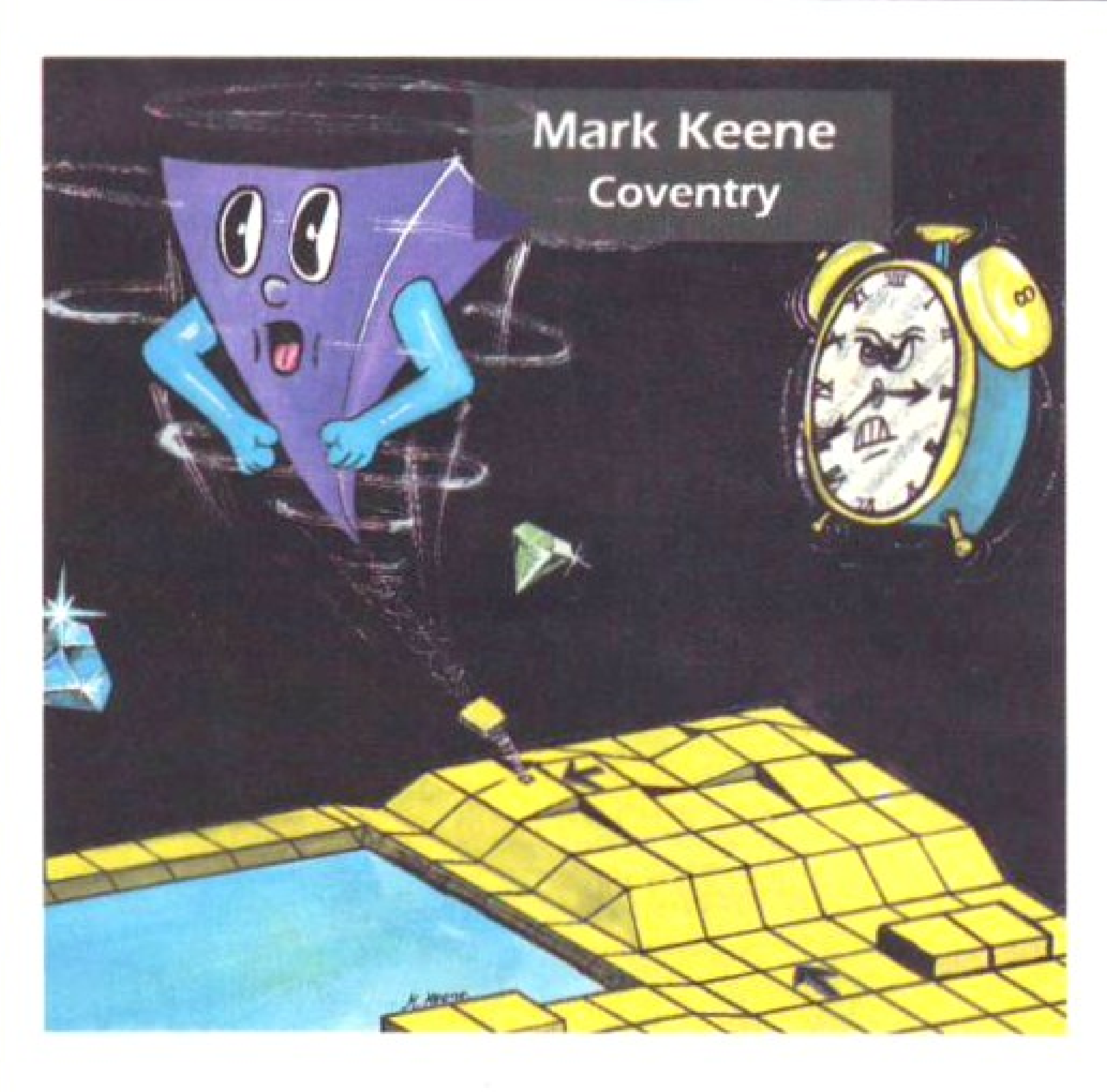
Alex Mackey
Woking

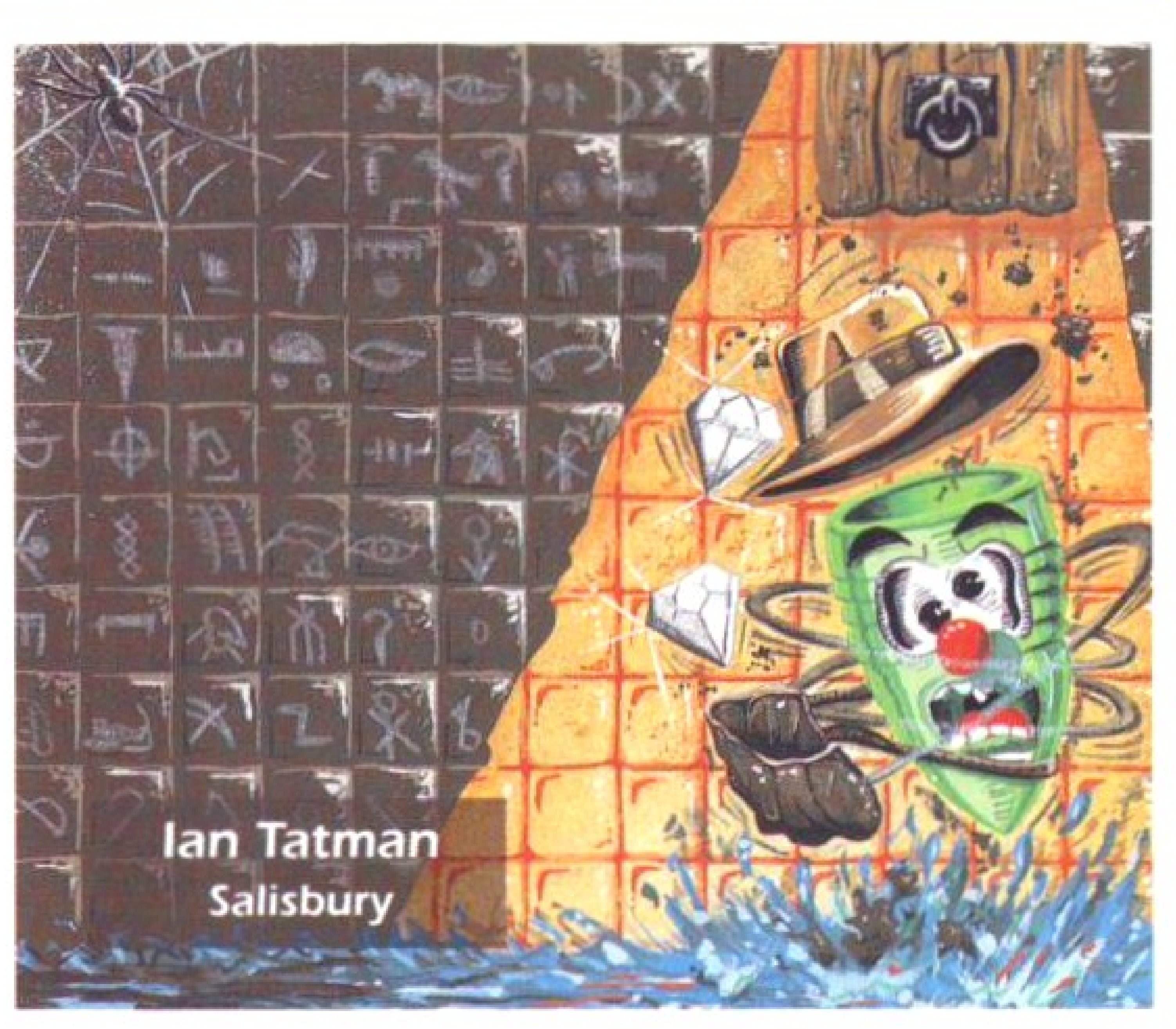


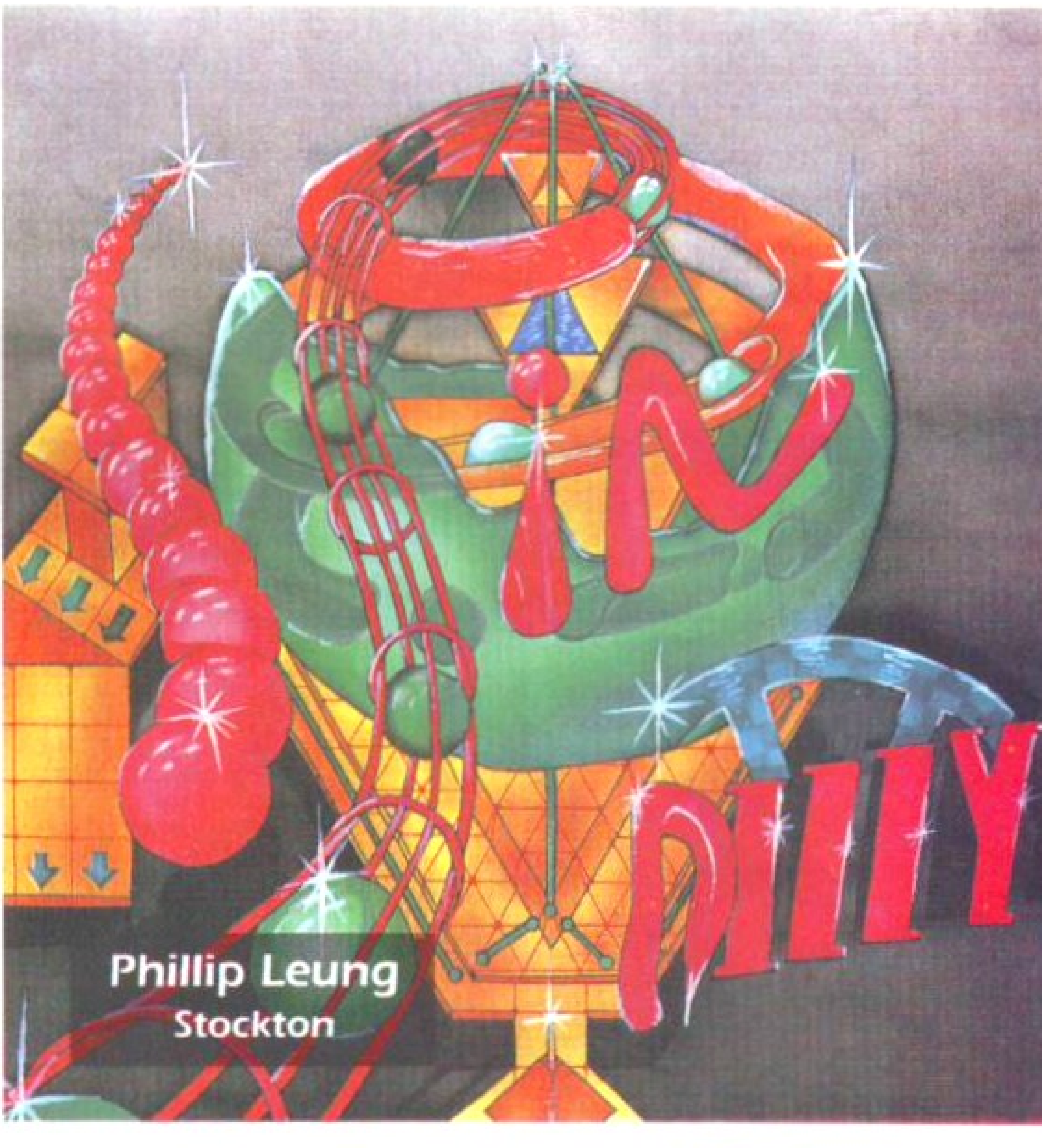
Keith Jones
Sutton

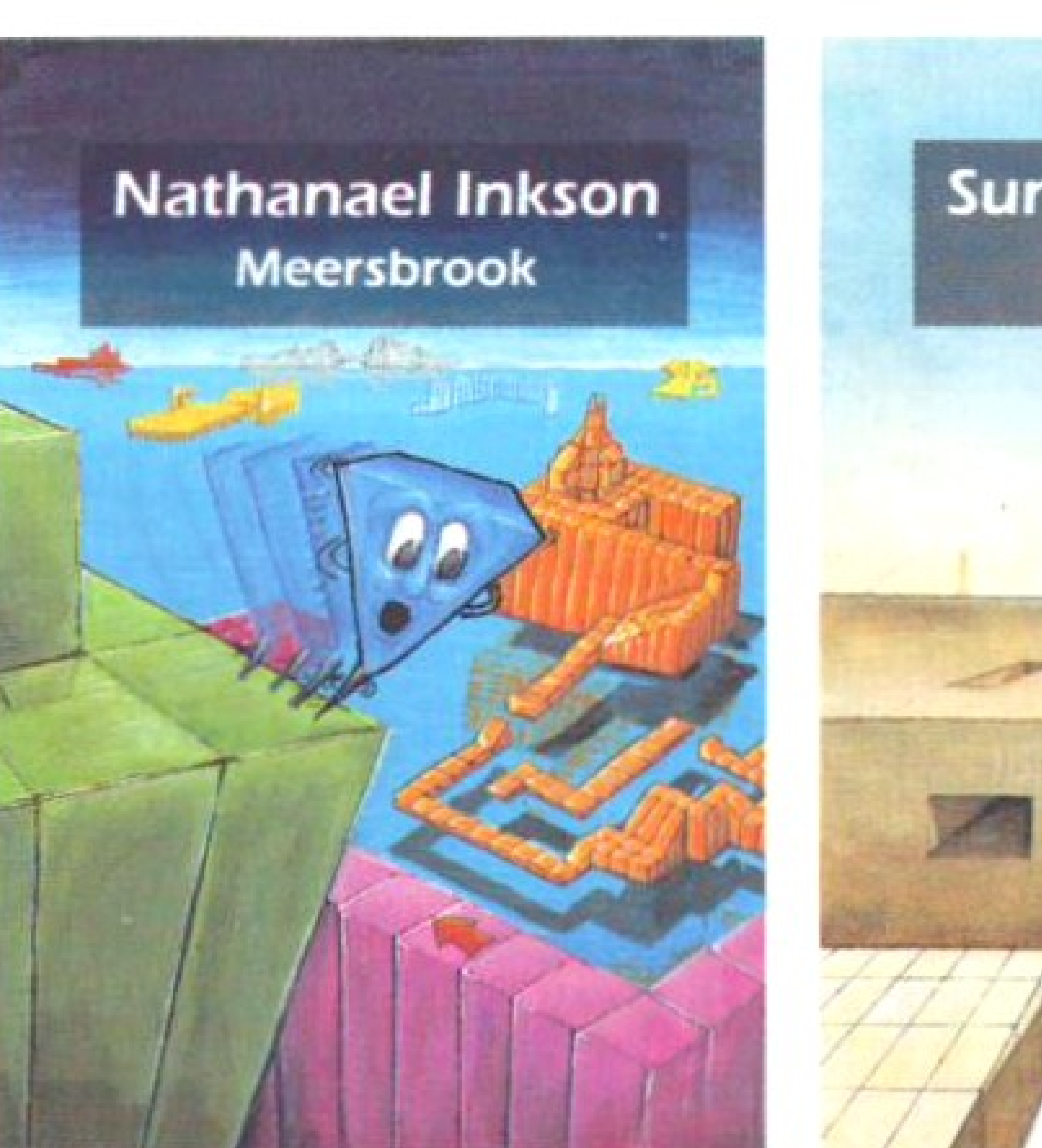
dizzy Winners

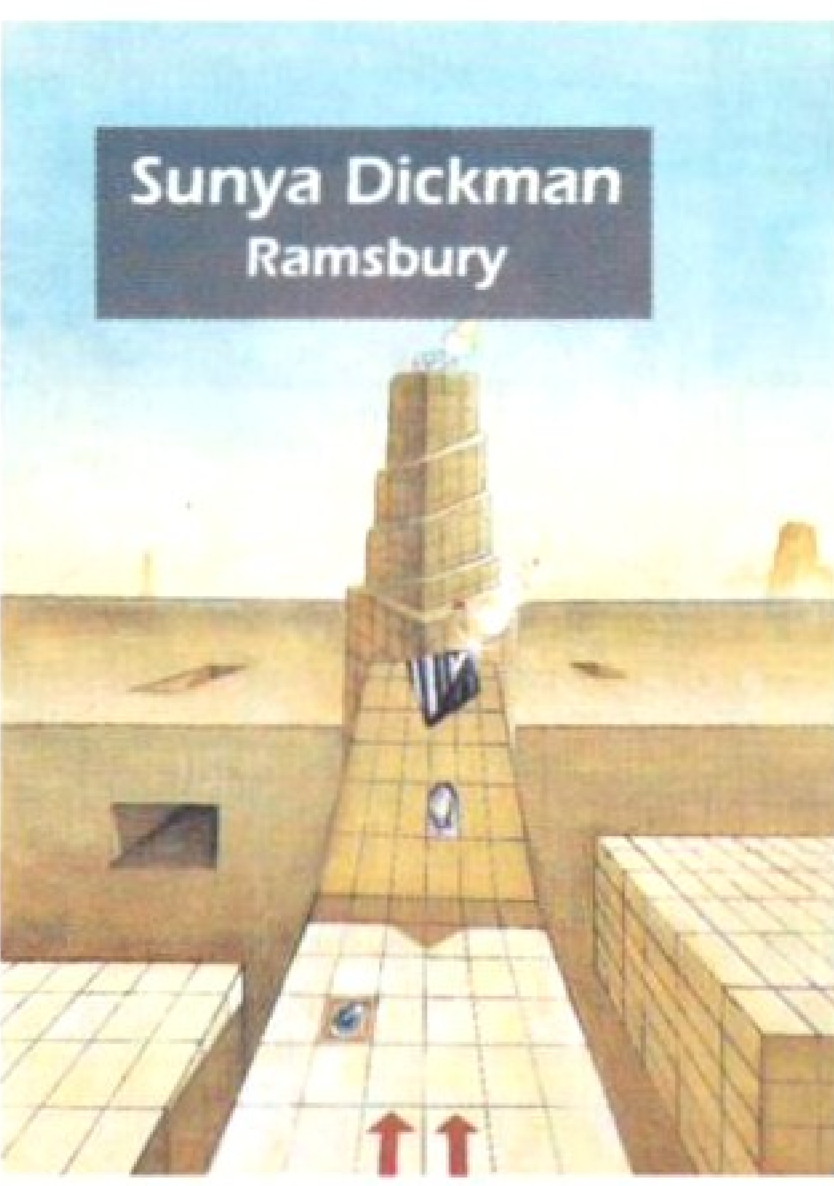
We had lots of outstanding entries to the Spindizzy competition in the September issue and we thought you would like to see the prizewinners. Congratulations to them and thank you to everyone who took the time and effort to enter the competition.

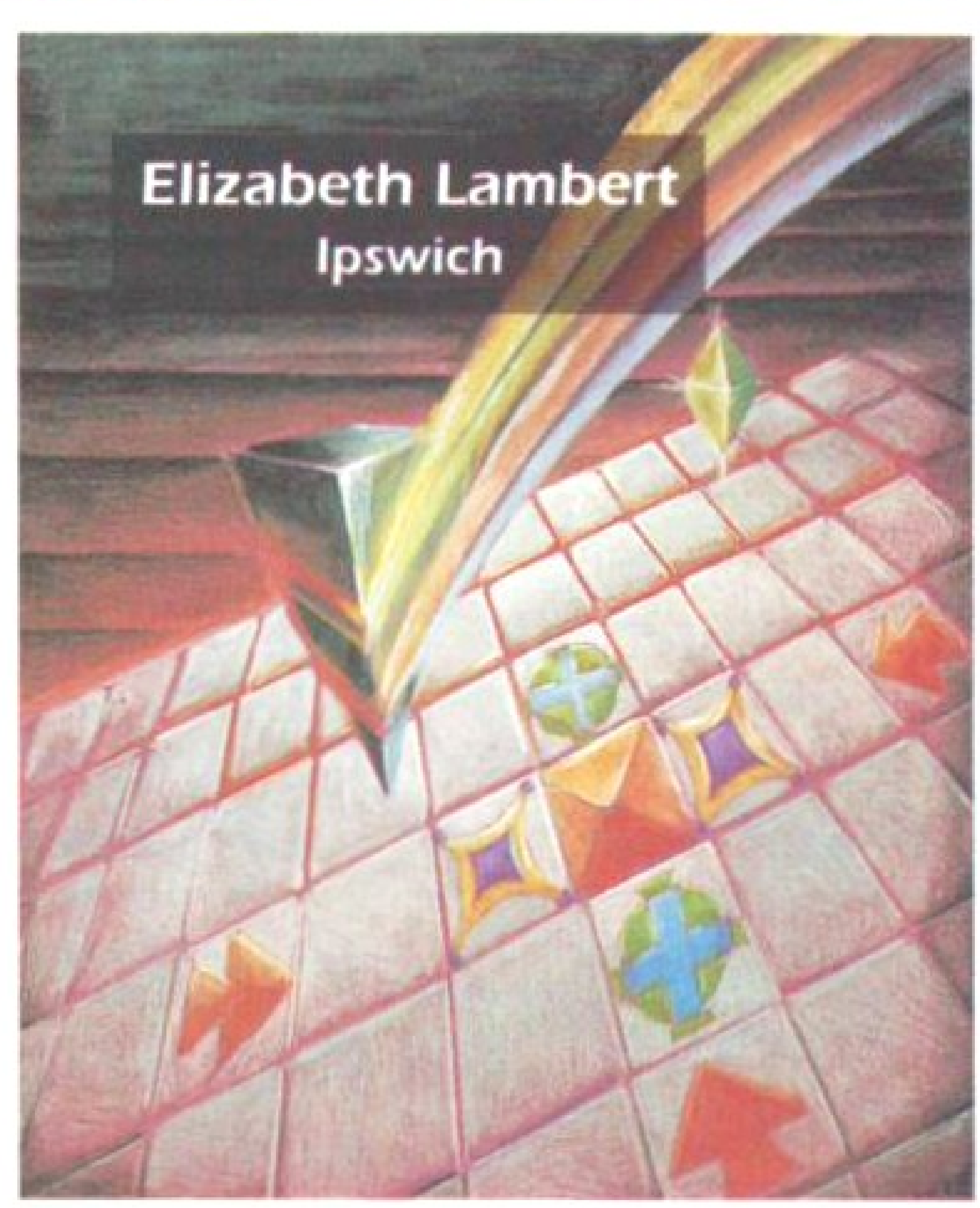

Mark Keene
Coventry


Ian Tatman
Salisbury


Phillip Leung
Stockton


Nathanael Inkson
Meersbrook


Sunya Dickman
Ramsbury


Elizabeth Lambert
Ipswich

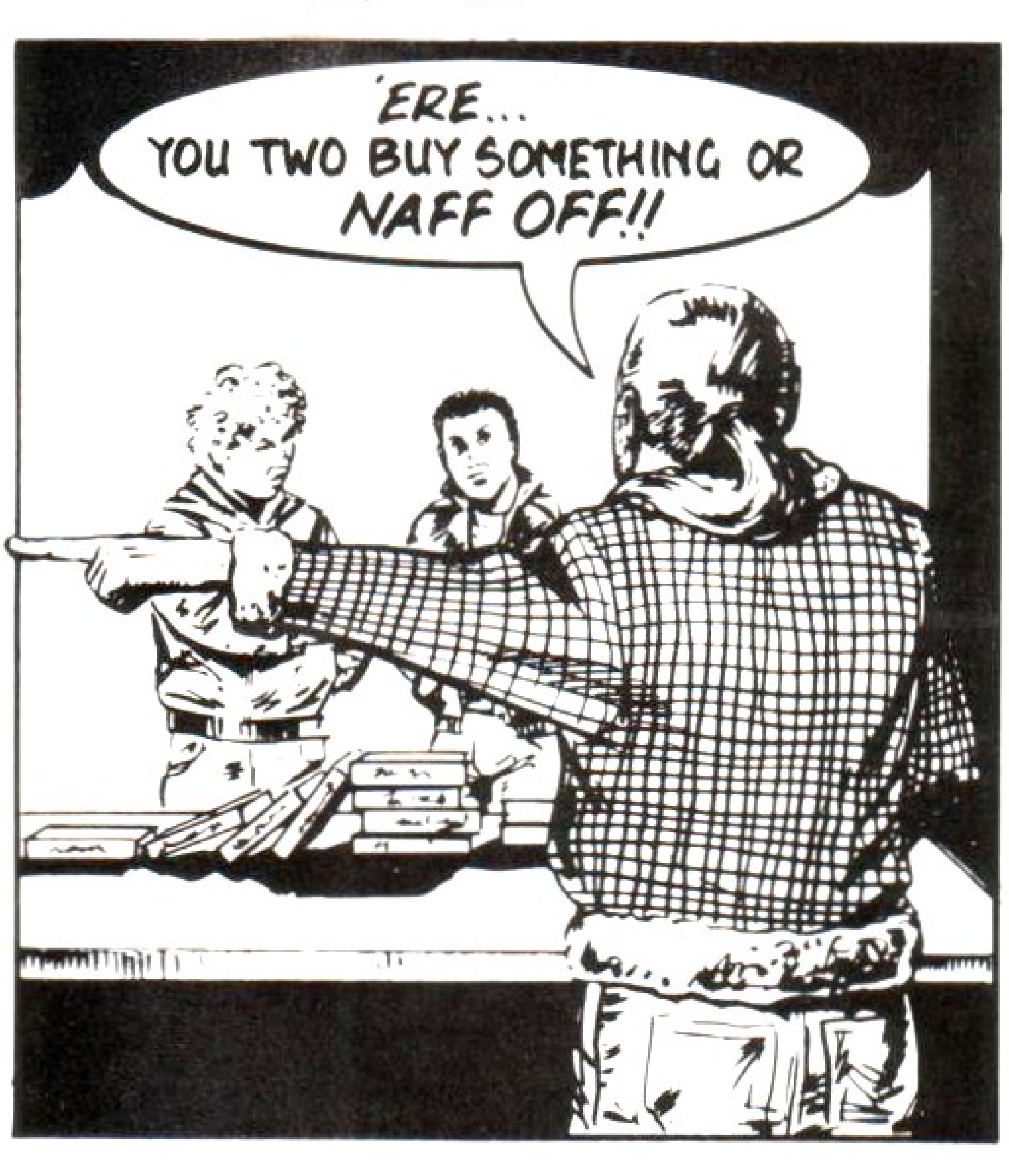
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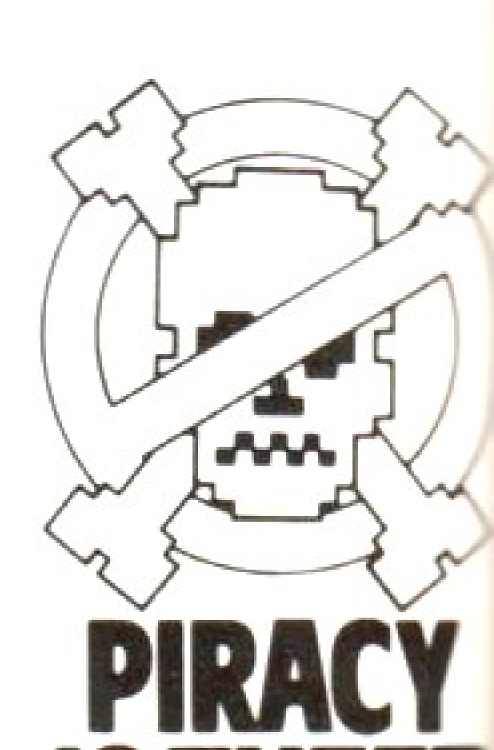
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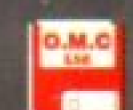
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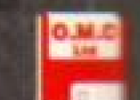
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Work bench

When you need information and no one else will help **PAT McDONALD** steps in to save the day – in his own wacky, weird and different way.

WASTED SPACE

I have a Commodore A590 *(which presumably is plugged into an Amiga – Pat)* and it's full of stuff that I don't want. Some of it lacks icons: how do I get rid of it?

Also I would like to know how to save files – eg when writing letters with *Protext* which are worth keeping a copy of – onto a floppy disk rather than onto the hard drive, without pulling the latter out of the side bus. Please help.

M S Bhail, Hounslow

You need to get into the Shell, and use the CD command (to Change Directory to the one you want), then the LIST command to see what's on there, and then the DELETE command to get rid of the offending file. To make Protext *look at the internal floppy drive, you need to type:* `CD DF0:`

Protext will now change Directory to DF0:, which is the internal floppy drive. Anything you save will be saved to there.

NO SWOOPING ALIENS

I really enjoy reading the magazine, and I just had to have the game *Girl Actions* on the October Coverdisk. Imagine my disappointment when it didn't work – it just came up with some cyan lettering.

I took it back to the store and they refunded the money, explaining that none of the *Amiga Format* disks worked properly.

This made me a bit leery about buying another issue. Why didn't any of them work? Could you send me another diskette with a working program on? My machine is an A2000, external drive, AT Bridgeboard, 1084 monitor, 3 Megs of RAM, A2300 Genlock Board.

Andy Teppin, Canada

To all the people with non-European Amigas who couldn't run Girl Actions – the problem is that it is a PAL (256 lines horizontal) game, and so won't work with NTSC (200 line) Amigas. I'm sorry about that, as it's an excellent game that deserved a place for those who could run it. I didn't realise how many overseas readers would like an Amiga version of the arcade classic.

If anybody out there has a version which will work on NTSC machines as well as PAL ones, please send it into me for possible use on a future disk. Do not send me faulty disks: you will get a replacement much more slowly, because I have to do what you should have done – send it back to the duplicators whose address is printed on the disk pages.

DIRECTORY CREATION

I don't give a damn about games – I bought the machine as a computer. Anyway, I'm stuck at making my own directories. How do I do it? I've read the manual all the way through and it's useless. Please tell me the information that I need.

Arman Turgut, London

On your Workbench disk you'll find an icon called Shell. This is used to really take control of the machine's system. When double-clicked on, it presents a prompt. Typing in commands here can give you the control you're looking for.

The problem with Shell is that it's very cumbersome to use on machines with only one disk drive, because it reads all the commands it uses from the Workbench boot disk. Be prepared for lots of disk swapping.

A full run down of AmigaDOS directories was printed in the last issue, so I suggest you look up the exact usage there. Not happy? OK, at the shell type:

`Makedir df0:Myfiles`

Continued overleaf ▸

A590 FIX



In *AF* 16, Ken Summers of Edinburgh complained of *VirusX 4.0* crashing with his new A590. I had exactly the same problem: when I attached a new A590 I found that *Deluxe Video III* crashed. I contacted Electronic Arts as trying to get through to Commodore's Technical Support appears to require the assistance of a professional medium!

EA's technical man knew the answer straightaway. It is a problem with some debugging info left in the Fast Filing System of a large batch of A590s. He promised to send me a copy of Commodore's Technote with details of the cure. Here it is:

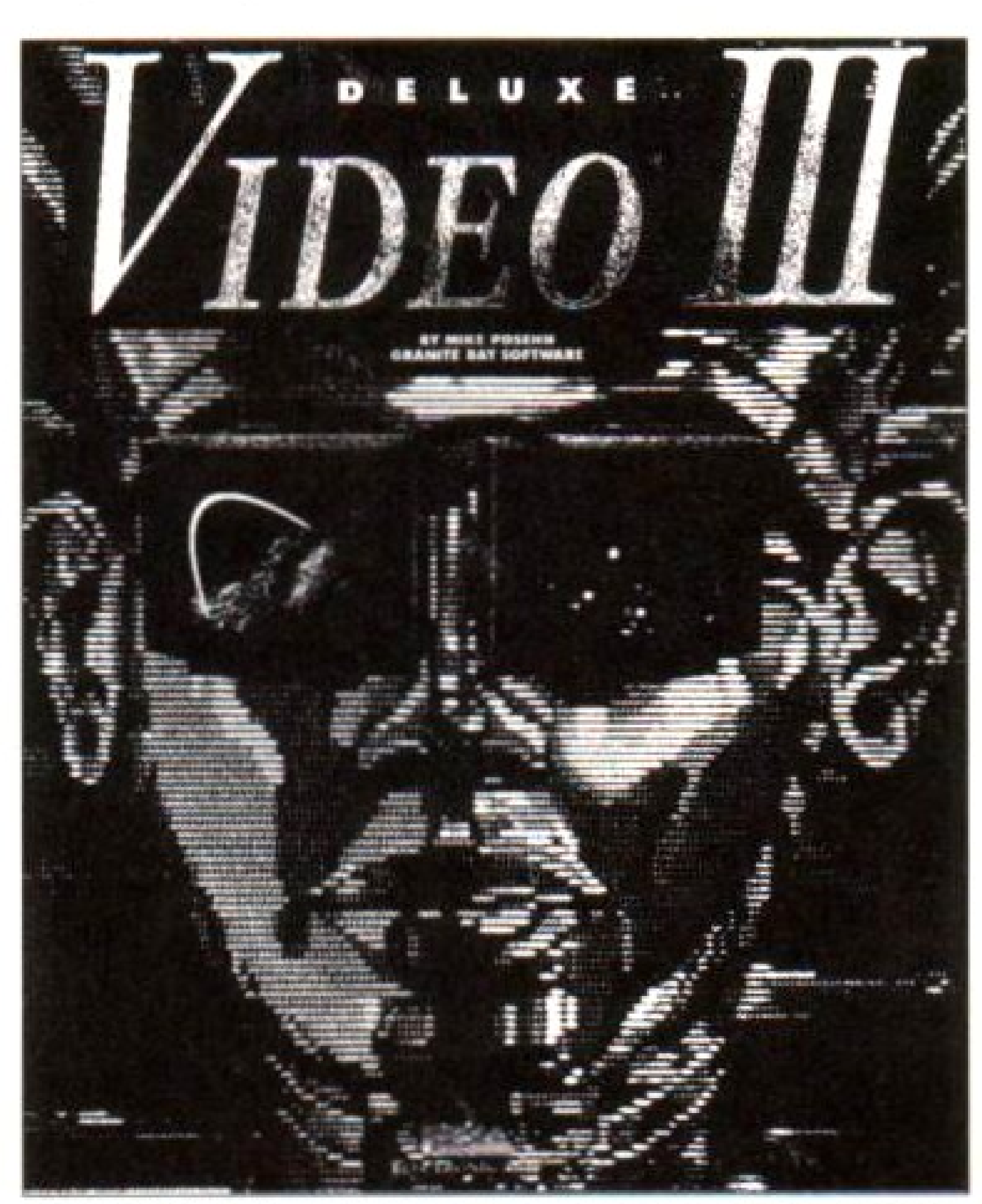
1) Make a copy of SETUP/INSTALL disk which came with your A590.
2) Switch everything off for at least 30 seconds before going any further.
3) Boot the Amiga and A590 using the copy of the SETUP/INSTALL disk.
4) When the disk icon appears, double-click on it and start the *HDToolBox* program.
5) On the initial screen of *HDToolBox* select the "Partition Drive" option.
6) At the partitioning screen select the "Advanced Options" box and some additional boxes will appear.
7) Select the "Add/Update File Systems" option.
8) Now click on the "Update File System", press RETURN and select "OK".
9) Click on "OK" on all the screens until you reach the initial screen.
10) Select "Save Changes to Drive" and then Exit.

If you find that the procedure solves the problem that you have been experiencing please write to: BUGS, Commodore Amiga Technical Support, Commodore House, The Switchback, Gardner Road, Maidenhead, SL6 7XA. Give details of the program name (and version number if known) along with the name of the software company.

Incidentally, since upgrading to Kickstart 1.3 *Deluxe Video III* doesn't work. Electronic Arts are looking into that one.

Adrian Streeter, York

Thanks very much, Adrian. It's a shame that Commodore don't send their Technical Support sheets direct to us, but you win a prize for taking the trouble to do the job for them. Incidentally,* VirusX 4.01 *will work with A590 hard drives – nice to see some people believe in updating their software.



A590 FIX: ***Deluxe Video III*** **used to be picky about a particular batch of A590s – but not any more!**

This will create a directory on the disk in drive 0 (almost certainly your Workbench disk) called Myfiles. To make sure it's there, type LIST or DIR, which will print the contents of the disk. If you just want to see what's in Myfiles, then type this instruction:

```
List Myfiles
```

To copy things from one place to another, use the command Copy. This is a cinch to use:

```
Copy FROM wherever TO Myfiles
```

Finally, you'll need an icon to see your directory on Workbench. Use this command line:

```
Copy FROM Utilities.info TO Myfiles.info
```

DRIVES 'N MEMORY

If I upgrade my computer by 1.5 Meg (making a total 2 Meg of memory) will I need a 2 Meg external drive, as I also want to buy another drive? What does the 2 Meg mean concerning drives?

Sorry if this sounds stupid – I'm just a little bit confused about the subject.

G Sayer, Hornchurch

When a drive (usually a hard drive) says that 2 Meg of memory can be fitted, then that means there's space on the device to put extra memory on. This is normal, everyday extra memory that can be used by the computer. Maybe you don't need extra memory (depends what programs you want to use, and how much memory they take) but just think of it as a disk drive to which you can plug in more memory that the computer can use. It's not for the disk drive, it's for the use of the computer like all memory.

DATA PORT

Although I use my Amiga for its wonderful sound and graphics, I still use my trusty Amstrad CPC 664 for my database. I would like to use the *Personal Database* software or *Pen Pal* for this, but I would prefer to port the data from my CPC to the Amiga – can this be done with *Masterfile* data or similar text files?

I've read (in *Get the Most out of Your Amiga*) how to connect two computers with a self-made datalink RS232 cable. Could this cable be made to work with my two computers?

I've got *Mini Office* for the CPC with a communication program. The problem is that I can't see how to physically connect the cable. My guess is to use the data output from the tape recorder socket, because there's a "data in", "data out" and "ground" on it.

I've already got a Psion LZ64 working perfectly happily with my Amiga, communicating via a cable supplied by Psion.

Ronny Declerq, Belgium

No, you don't use the tape socket. Although the Amiga has a built-in serial RS232 port, the CPC doesn't. You have to buy one to plug in the back of your Amstrad. They generally come with their own software built in on a ROM chip, which makes using Mini Office *a redundant idea.*

Once you have an RS232 interface for your CPC (make sure the software has the ability to send and receive with the Xmodem protocol), you'll need some software to get your Amiga working. NComm *or* Access! *are Public Domain programs, widely available from PD libraries – they'll do the business. If you bought the* Get the Most... *book with the disks, you will already have a PD comms program called* JRComm.

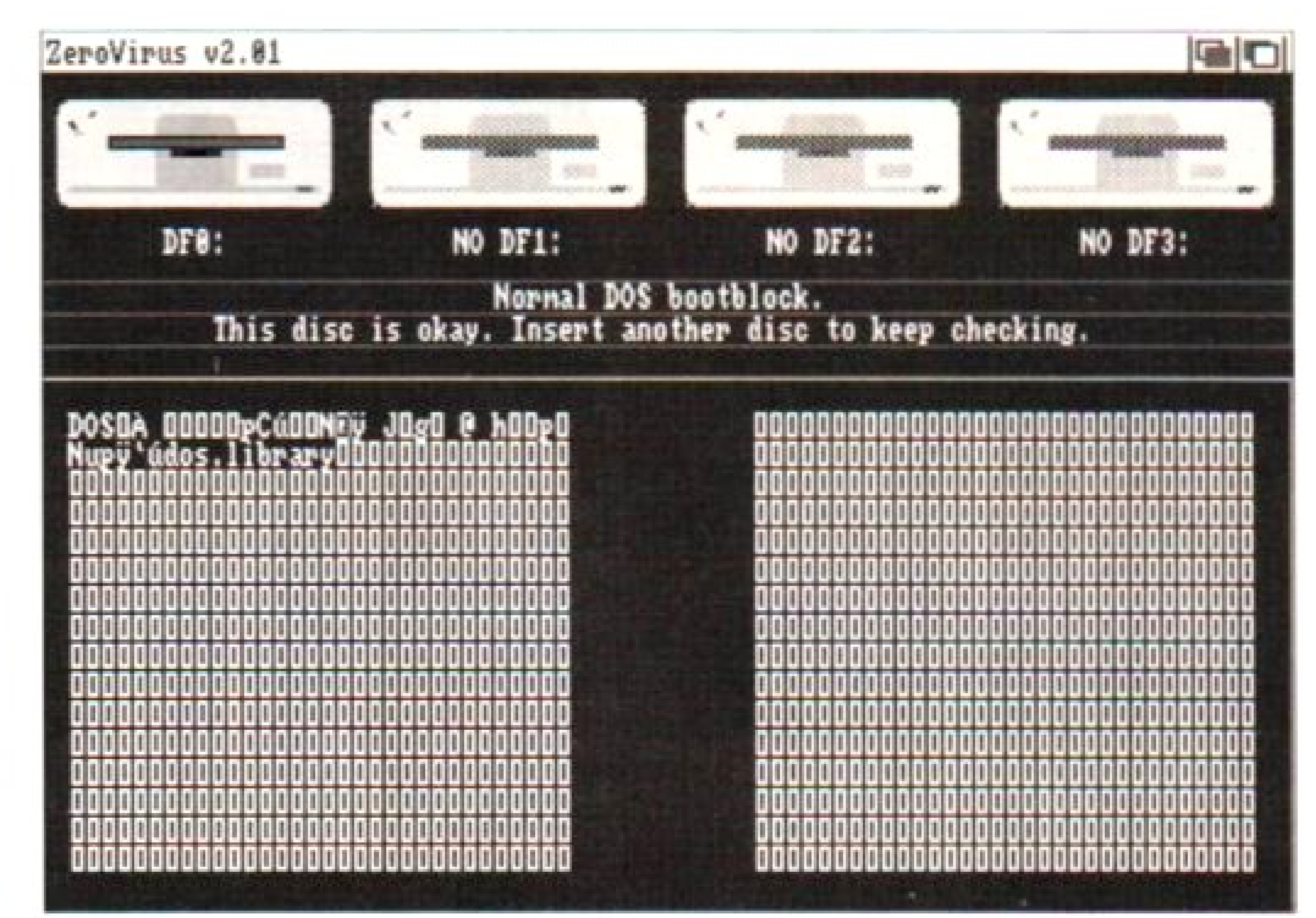
Finally, once you've got the two machines talking to one another (you were perfectly correct about the choice of cable) and start downloading files onto your Amiga, you will probably need to change them slightly. A word processor is very handy for this, loading in the datafiles and replacing the embedded codes for Masterfile *with the ones needed for your Amiga database. You'll probably find it easier if you check out what your Amiga database needs first, and then adjust the data file to suit the final database.*

JUST A FEW...

1) I am thinking of buying a new monitor and I have two in mind, the Phillips CM8833 and the Commodore 1084. Can you tell me the differences between them?
2) Is it possible to digitise in full colour from a video recorder using Vidi-Amiga?
3) As well as the Amiga I also have an Amstrad CPC464. Does any kind of emulator exist that will allow me to run Amstrad software on my A500?
4) Can you recommend a good animation package?
5) Why don't some of the Coverdisk demos (*Menace, Cadaver, Flip-It And Magnose*) have any sound?

G Christodoulou, Great Yarmouth

1) Very little, under the shell. I do know that the Phillips is undergoing some cosmetic changes, so the older stock will probably be sold off much cheaper than normal – keep an eye out for bargains, as it's still a good monitor. So is the 1084, except for the slightly higher price.



OOPS! Always use virus checkers with the greatest of care, as they can destroy viruses on working disks

2) Yes, but only if you have Vidi-Chrome, Vidi-RGB and a video recorder with a crisp freeze frame. See last month's comprehensive review of Vidi-RGB (Amiga Format *17, Page 237).*
3) No emulator exists for the Amstrad CPC range.
4) Depends on the animation you want. Sculpt 4D *and* Turbo Silver *are excellent for ray-traced animation.* FantaVision *is a powerful program for more two dimensional animations with changing edges.* Deluxe Paint III *(apart from being the premier non-HAM art program) has good facilities for moving around shapes that don't change, and the last two together would be good for 2D animation.*
5) Quite often demos don't have sound in order to be smaller on the disk so that more can be fitted on. I'm going to make an effort to get more sound onto the Coverdisks, though.

OOPS!

My 11-year-old son chose to buy *AF* 15. This had the *ZeroVirus* virus checker on it, so he decided to check out his collection of disks. When he found a Lamer bootblock virus, he chose the Install option from the menu, and continued checking disks.

I am very concerned that many of the disks we installed are now unusable. What can we do? How do we proceed?

T Kane, Glasgow

If you find a virus, automatically zapping it is not a good idea if it's on a game disk. It's wiser to send the game back to the manufacturers with a letter explaining the situation and asking for another, virus-free copy. The reason is that many games have their own customised bootblocks which are destroyed if a disk is installed to get rid of a virus.

ZeroVirus is designed to be easy to use, but all virus checkers work on the assumption that anything that isn't a standard bootblock might be a virus. So only use a virus checker on disks which rely on each other (like a word processor and data disks) and always switch the machine on, off and on again between using different programs – no virus can spread past that precaution.

Continued on Page 277 ▸



DATA PORT: The Amstard CPC needs an RS232 interface before it will be able to communicate with an Amiga.

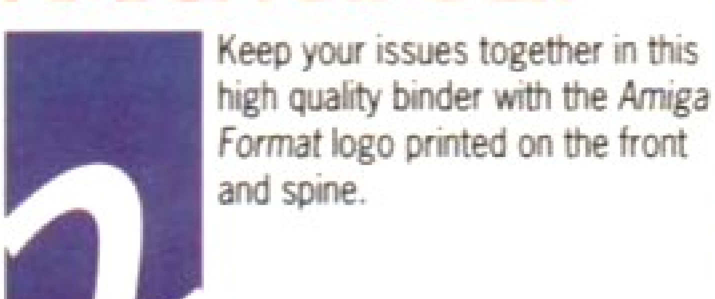
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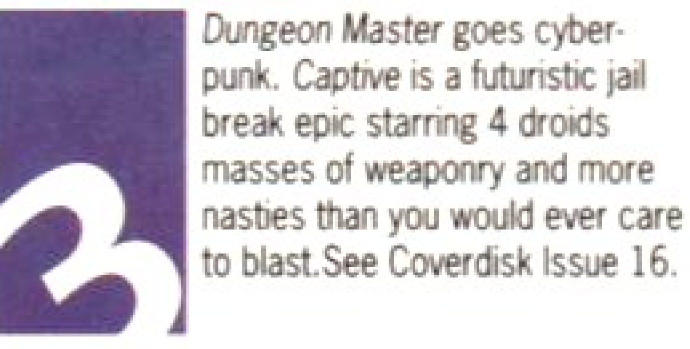
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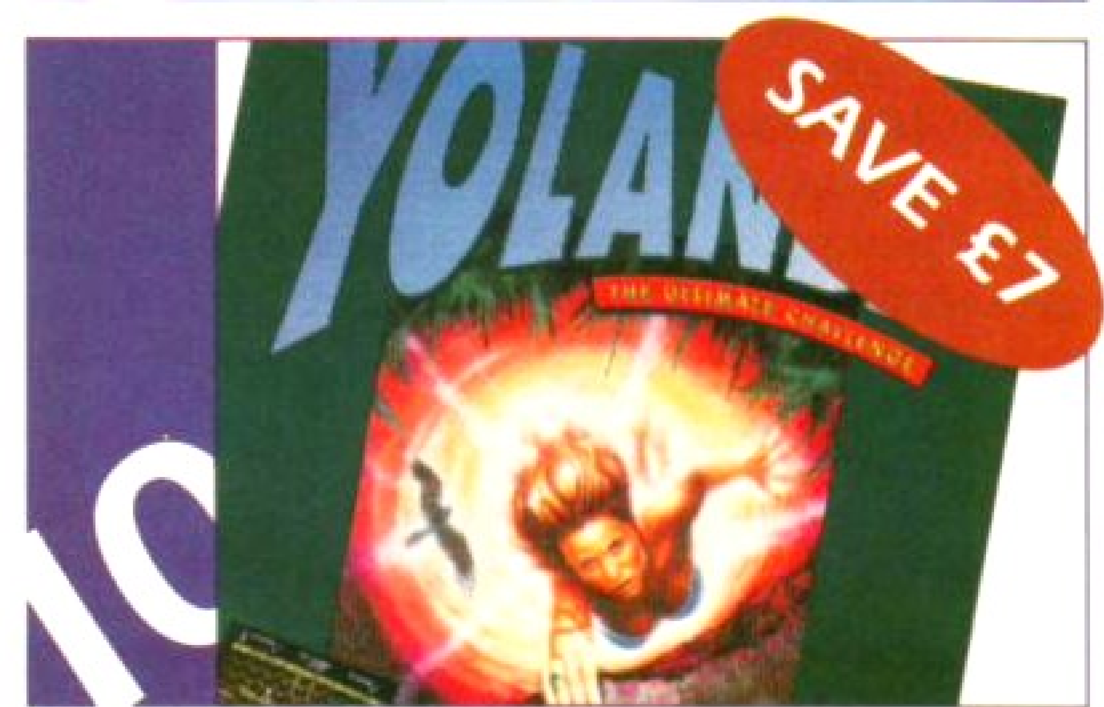


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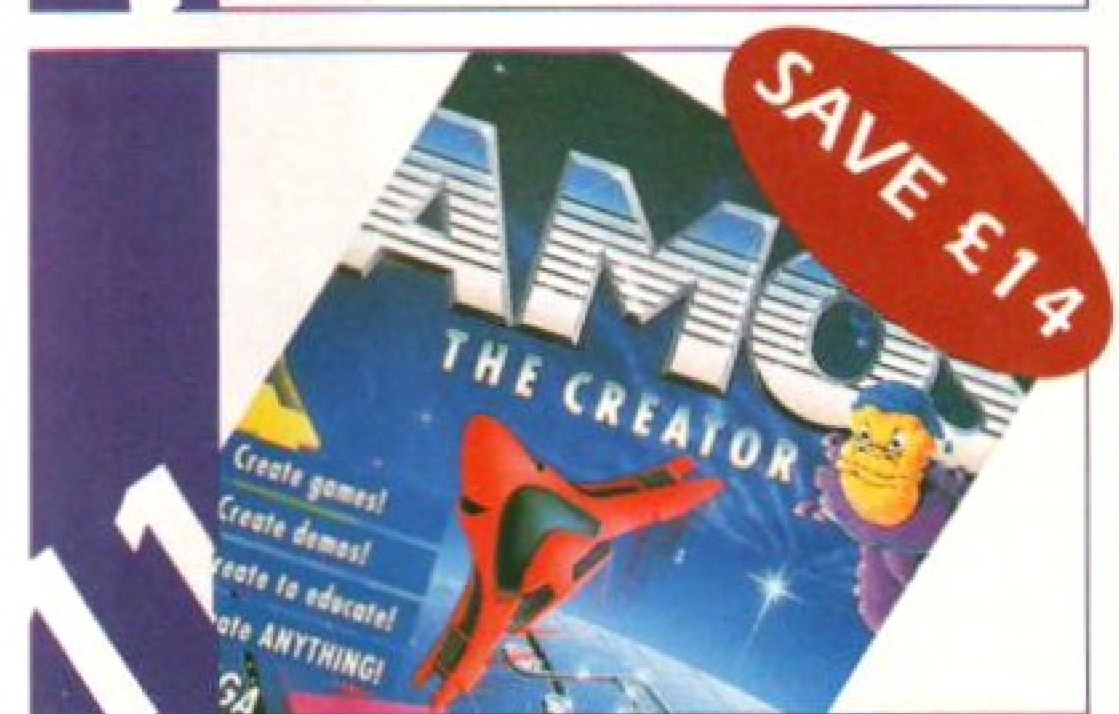
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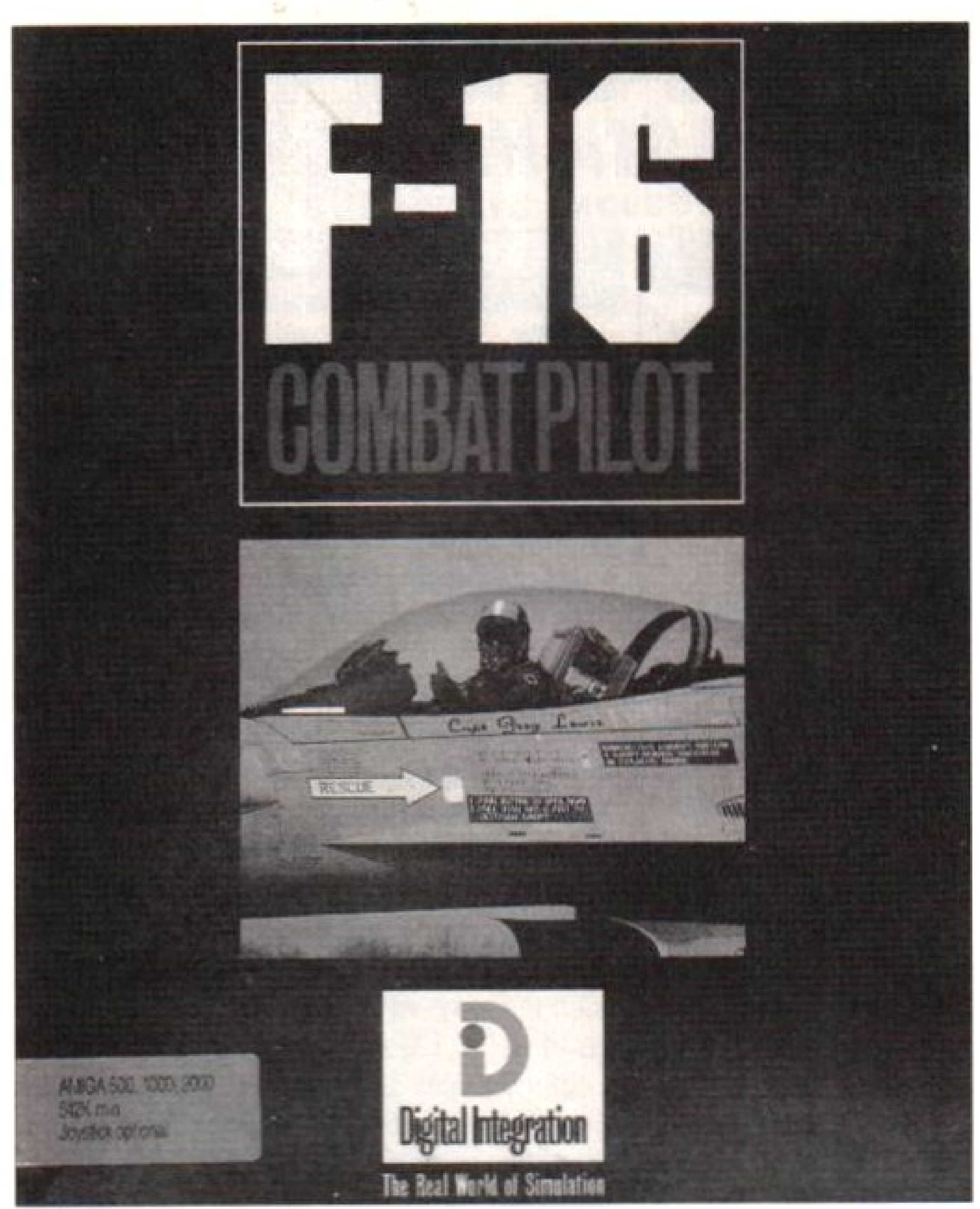
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LINGUISTIC OPINIONS: The action in *F-16 Combat Pilot* tends to get *extremely* competitive when two people are playing head-to-head.

LINGUISTIC OPINIONS

I am a proud owner of an Amiga, and like many of my friends I have some games for it. Unlike my friends I really bought it to learn how to program and eventually produce my own software.

I've had the computer for over a year now (although it was in repair for about 60% of the time for design faults) and have so far mastered the use of the Workbench and I am now trying to master the CLI. An experienced user that I know of keeps telling me to forget the Workbench and CLI as these are useless, and to purchase an assembler package and beginning coding as that's how he started. I asked him "Why not learn AmigaBASIC?" to which he replied that it is harder to learn and is much more complicated, whereas the assembler language is easier. Is this true? What computer language would you suggest for a beginner?

By using the Workbench and various art packages, I connect the Amiga to a video recorder and produce my own video programs. A method I often use is to type in sentences using the Workbench's SAY command, record them on audio tape and then play it back while typing in the sentence at the same time (using the art package fonts). The result looks very much like the messages on the rental videos. It's a great way to personalise your own video collection.

One last quick question: I'm currently putting together a connecting lead for the serial port so that I can connect two computers together, so can you please advise me on any programs that use this method?

David M Flint
Middlesbrough

People quite often have a terrible fascination for machine code or assembler. Incidentally, the two terms are virtually interchangeable – assembler is a series of instructions with which humans write as programs, machine code is the list of numbers which computers really understand. They translate exactly into the same instructions – just remember that assembly language is what humans use, whereas machine code is the binary numbers that the actual microprocessors feed on.

It's a relatively easy task to get a machine code program that's graphically impressive, fast moving etc. Hence all the demos in the Public Domain. But machine code is vastly more complex for humans to write worthwhile programs in. Your friend can probably get lots of sprites whizzing about the screen, but ask him to write a program which can work out an estimate of the height of a human being from a given weight and he probably wouldn't have a clue.

Programming is all about problem solving. Machine code is a low-level language, where more instructions are required to do something than in Basic. Now, an assembly language program would still be shorter than a Basic one, because assembly language instructions are much, much smaller than one Basic instruction.

BASIC gives you power at a higher, slower, easier level. You can do things like logarithmic arithmetic in a couple of instructions, and generally it takes you less time to write a given program than using assembler. A machine code program would be quicker and smaller than a Basic program, but would take longer to write.

As for assembler being easier to learn than Basic – that's not correct. Basic gives you a command over programming at a very early stage, and is genuinely easier to learn, plus there are many more books on Basic than on machine code.

AmigaBASIC is admittedly not an outstanding Basic. However as a starting point it will serve you very well. Why not learn as much as you can from AmigaBASIC, then progress to AMOS, which is a fast Basic that can handle graphics and sound very well indeed? If you are serious about programming ultra-fast, ultra-small machine code programs, with lots of experience under your belt, then go for it as a third step.

It takes an almighty effort to be a successful programmer. Some people make the effort unconsciously, and forget the thousands of hours they have spent trying to program their computers to do what they want.

It's nice to see somebody is actually using their machine for something useful. F16 Combat Pilot *from Digital Integration works with a two computer option, as do* Flight Simulator II *from Sub Logic and* Stunt Car *from MicroProse.*

AF WRONG (AGAIN)



I know you are probably well aware of what I am about to say but the answer you gave in *AF* 16 about Ian Parker's A590 problem is quite misleading. Therefore it may be worth mentioning something in the next issue to put aside people's fears that they may all have knackered hard drives.

The information written on the label on the hard drive is quite rightly a list of defects but this does not matter as virtually no drives are manufactured perfectly. As with modern RAM chips they have been built with certain safety nets that allow slight imperfections to creep in without affecting performance. For example, RAM is built with more columns than necessary since some will be faulty and just the ones that function normally will be connected to the pins of the final chip. This means that there is less wastage.

This defect list is printed in the factory in the final testing, the duff sectors are marked as such and then reassigned to dedicated areas of the hard drive. If there are too many of them then the drive is trashed but by using this method there is a much lower failure rate. Many drives are intelligent enough to find any errors developed in their working life and reassign them by themselves without the user even realising.

This data may be read with a SCSI 37H command and blocks may be reassigned manually with a SCSI 07H command, which all drives should support.

I pilfered most of my information from a friend who designs the things. So, ignore the defect list printed on the label as it is only there if you should want to know where the duff sectors live for some unknown reason.

PS Great Mag! But the "Build Muscles Fast" advertisement on Page 234 of *AF* 16 must be a first for a computer magazine!

Alex Clark, Aberdeen

Thanks for the info. We're not too proud to admit we make mistakes, so you win a prize for your troubles. As for the advert, extra muscles for readers are not a silly idea given the current size of our issues...



AF WRONG (AGAIN): Hard disk drives are apparently often built imperfectly, but they still work fine despite small flaws.

Chip RAM upgrading

In a unique departure for the ever-popular Workbench, **PAT McDONALD** gives some insights on a subject that has captured the imagination of many readers…

Chip RAM is memory that all the custom chips can access without troubling the 68000 CPU for additional instructions. In other words, it's the area where all the sounds, graphics and animations are temporarily stored and manipulated within the computer.

For a while after the Amiga was invented, Commodore stuck with 0.5 Meg of chip RAM. Which meant that the machine was set at this limit as far as lengths of sound samples or graphic displays were concerned.

In their wisdom, Commodore decided to beef up the Amiga. They devised something called the Enhanced Chip Set or ECS for short. Machines with ECS can access different graphical display sizes – much better resolution, more colours etc.

To use the ECS, two of the four custom chips within the Amiga have to be replaced. These are the Agnus chip (every machine produced today has the new, 'fatter' Agnus) and also the Denise chip (for the higher resolutions – A500s at present do not contain the new ECS Denise chip).

It follows that having higher resolutions requires more memory – chip RAM – to get the best out of a multitasking computer. The 'fatter' (sorry Commodore – you say 'thicker' don't you?) Agnus enables A500s to access more memory – 1 Meg – as chip RAM. A few modifications are also required for A500 owners.

A2000 owners already have the 'fatter' Agnus fitted as standard, with 1 Meg of chip RAM, so most of what follows is really only of interest to A500 owners.

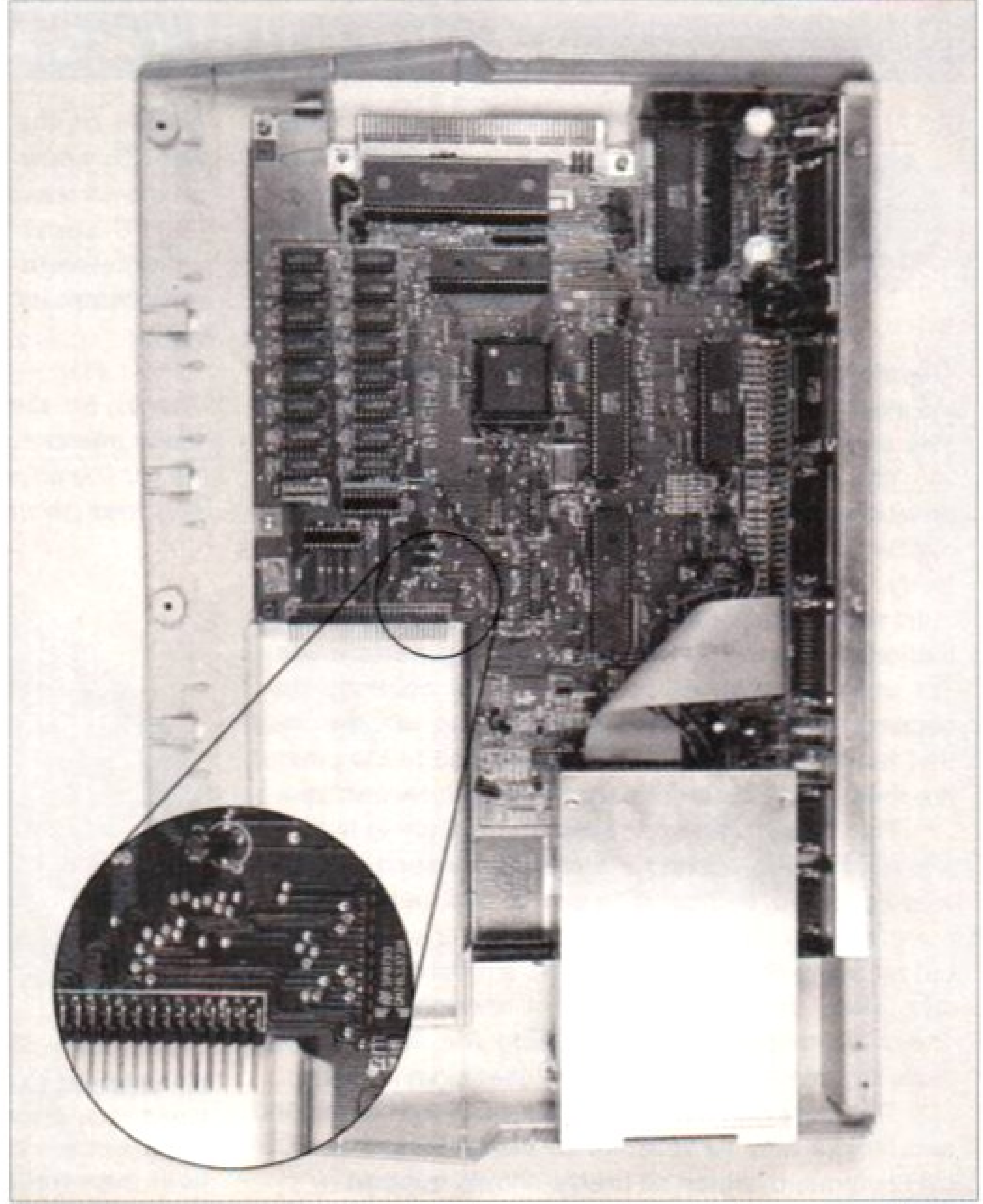
Lucky A3000 owners are still better off. They've got the 'even fatter' Agnus which gives 2 Meg of chip RAM, plus the new Denise chip with the ECS. Which means they've got the best graphics on any kind of Amiga – unless it's possible to upgrade A2000 and A500 machines…

Upgrading

First, you need one Meg of RAM. We've had letters asking if a 'fatter' Agnus magically gives you more memory, and no it doesn't – you have to fit the memory separately. See *AF* 17 for a round-up of RAM expansions if you want to be able to remove the memory at any time. A few games don't actually work with machines with more than 512K of memory!

Alternatively, what you can do with revision six A500s is to fit four RAM chips and four decoupling capacitors on the inside of the Amiga. This voids your warranty: the Commodore National Repair Centre also won't touch the machine with a bargepole if it needs to be fixed in future. So my advice is, get a 512K RAM expansion that fits to the underneath (in the trapdoor slot) and don't try to be clever.

Right, the next step is to get a 'fatter' Agnus. Nowadays, most machines are already fitted with them (the *Vectacheck* program on *AF* 15 will tell you for sure). If not, when it's fitted (in the original Agnus socket, with the same orientation) make sure that pin 41 is bent so that it doesn't fit into the socket on the computer board.



This is a close-up of the track that you need to cut when upgrading revision five A500s to one Meg of chip RAM.

Get this operation done by a registered Commodore repairman if your machine is still under warranty and needs a 'fatter' Agnus (improbable but not impossible).

Next is the technical 'Oh no, McDonald's playing with a soldering iron' bit. There are (roughly speaking) two breeds of A500, known as revisions five and six. On revision six machines, jumper JP7A needs to be cut, and jumper JP2 needs the connection between the bottom solder pads cut, and the top two pads connected. The full step-by-step procedure was printed in *AF* 15.

Revision five A500s need the JP2 modification as above, but they don't have a JP7A. Instead, you have to cut a solder track. I will describe how to do it, but I'll also warn you right now that it's not 'simplicity itself' and is better left to an engineer.

The track-to-be-cut is the _EXRAM signal, and starts off at pin 32 of the trapdoor connector, on the underside of the main Amiga board. The trapdoor is counted from the bottom right pin when looking down at the A500 board from above and in front, that is with the top, keyboard and shield removed. That's pin 1 on the bottom right, OK?

Pin 2 is to the left, pin 3 is above pin 1, pin 4 is above pin 2 and to the left of pin 3, etc. At the top are pins 55 and 56. About one eighth of an inch to the left of pin 41 is a small hole with a track running up the board, very close to the white outline printed on the board (the silk screen).

Anyway, the track running up from the hole is the one you have to cut. DON'T cut the white line – there's another track hidden underneath it.

Future expansion

The other bits that you need in order to use the extra ECS graphic modes are an ECS Denise – a Commodore engineer, when asked if it was possible to fit this to an A500, replied "I think so" – a new Kickstart ROM, V2.0, and also a copy of Workbench 2.

Currently, none of these upgrades is available separately. The only way to get hold of them would be to buy an A3000 and strip them out, which is an extravagant waste. We'll let you know when or if they are available as spares, but it probably won't be until well after Christmas.

Will it be possible to turn an A500 or a B2000 into an A3000? The answer is still unknown at present, but when we get our hands on the various items we'll let you know.

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GURU'S MEDITATIONS

NEXT MONTH

The February issue will be on sale on Thursday 10th January. It will be back to its £2.95 price and with the usual single disk, but just as packed as ever with good stuff. As well as continuing our beginners' series we'll have a feature aimed at guiding new and old users through the minefield of computer services like repairs, technical support, user groups, public domain and so on. We'll also be telling you what are the greatest games of all time that you simply have to have. There will be the usual high-octane mixture of serious software and hardware reviews, tips, graphics tutorials and musical pleasure. So don't miss this modern icon, this jewel in a silver sea, this... (You're sacked. Next! - Ed)

CDTV UPDATE

Waiting to see if you're one of the lucky CDTV testers? Then check out the news pages for an update on the CDTV's progress.

CAPTAIN WHINGE

...not only that but I've been appalled at the pathetic amount of space devoted to the Guru, he hasn't let me have a good whinge for months because he says his cosmic space allocation is too restricted by that horrid editor who spends all his time playing *Indy 500* and... (You're sacked. Next!! - Ed)

CHRISTMAS PUZZLE

The puzzle was such a success last year that we thought we'd run it again, so here's the question: if your partner or parents haven't hidden your present on top of the wardrobe under the spare duvet and next to the 1972 Pifco hairdryer, then just where have they put it?

All you have to do is find out before Dec 25th, send us the answer on a postcard and we'll completely ignore it... (You're sacked. Next!!! - Ed)

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

1990, was billed as being, 'the start of a new decade' and as such fulfilled its purpose fairly well. However, it just wasn't compatible enough to really be considered of use to most people.

SPEED: Another birthday went by far too quickly for my liking and ticked up another year on my age.

DOCUMENTATION: Far too much of it! Could we have less paperwork for the next version, please?

ACCESSIBILITY: Took until March to sober up, which isn't very good.

FEATURES: Started off attractively enough, but got kind of ugly towards the end.

VALUE FOR MONEY: Far too expensive, but fortunately there was an awful lot packed into it...

(You're sacked. Next!!!! Ed)

COMPETITION WINNERS

A5000 COMP

The answers were B,C and C. The winner of an A5000 is: Paul Wigley, Shrewsbury.

TRILOGIC COMP

The answers were B,C and A. The three winners of Miniamp 5 Stereo Speaker Systems are: Neil McManus, Bushey; Adam Cooper, Hythe; Ben Lamb, Lowestoft.

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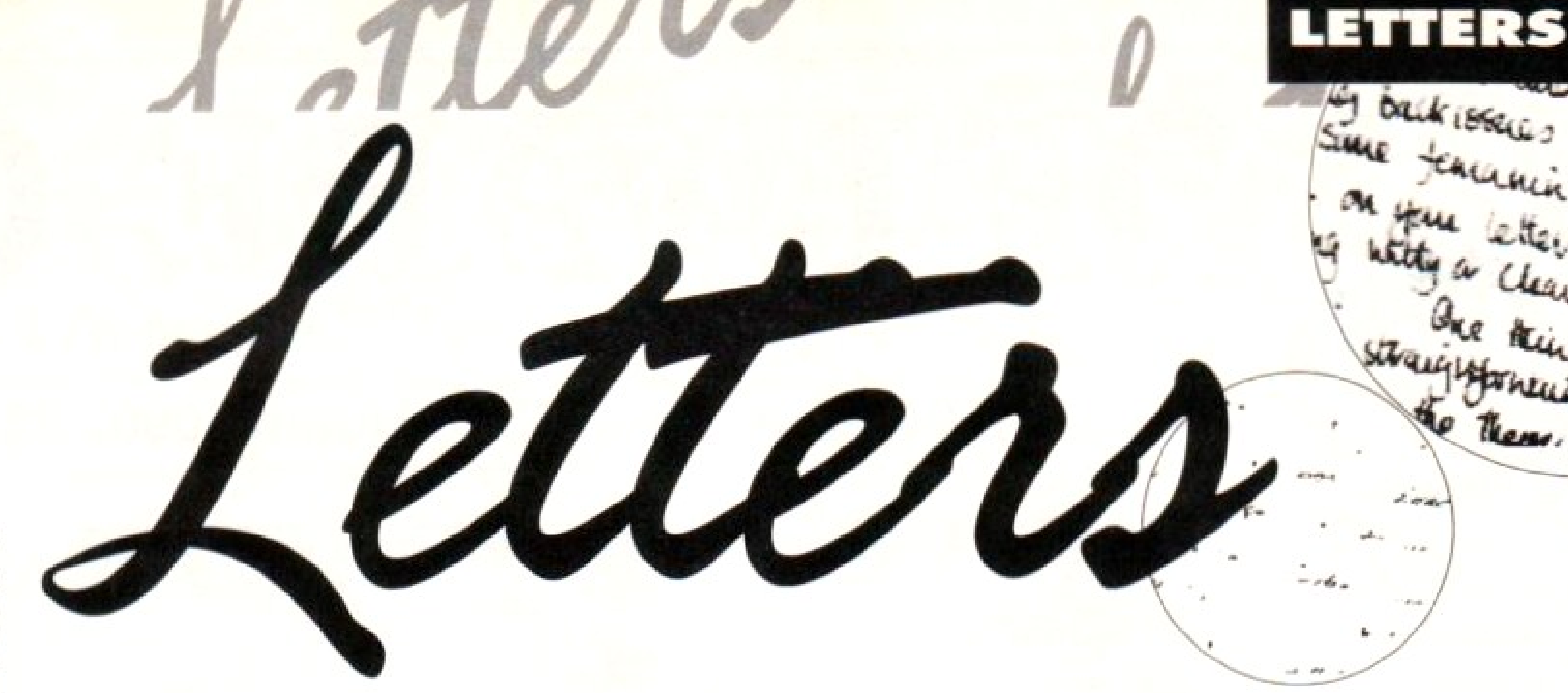
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Once Upon a Time...

PRIZE Letter

Well here I am, totally new to *Amiga Format* and Commodore both. Having got my new (to me) Amiga home – from Cardiff – where I'd picked it up for a song (la la la), I began the arduous task of setting up my new acquisition in readiness for my first lesson in Amiga-speak.

Having owned a humble Spectrum – pardon my language – for some years, it was not too difficult to suss out what plug went where and I was really proud of myself for getting things up-and-running in such a short time – not counting meal breaks.

Well, they do say that "Pride Cometh Before a Smack In The Gob With a Wet Fish", in the words of Jim Diamond, "I Shoulda Known Better": plug in and modulator in position; telly on; power up. There I sat, looking at this white screen with the funny picture on it. Nothing happened.

Being reasonably intelligent it didn't take me too many hours to realise that this was some kind of prompt I was looking at. Sure. It's a hand holding one of them disc (sorry disk) things. It wants me to put a disk in...righto. Standing on my head I read the label..."Amiga Work Bench". I found the correct disk in the pile of junk that I had thrown in the corner, I had thought it was part of the packaging. Oh, I was pleased with myself.

Now, not wanting to make any more mistakes I decided I should do everything in the most correct manner, so looking at my on-screen prompt – see I'm already using the lingo – I emulated (!) the illustration and, holding my Workbench Disk in my left hand (as shown), I attempted to insert it (disk not hand) into the computer's internal drive.

'Glowering Gynaecology, Batman', it's a right-hand Drive! Well, 'Butter me Crumpet' and 'Shiver me Timber', have you ever tried inserting your little floppy into the right slot with the wrong hand? No, neither have I but I really gave it a good go this time. 'Alas, poor Tricky Dicky I knew him well'...but not well enough to get the dammed thing into the right-handed disk drive with my left hand. I thought of phoning Commodore and asking if they would mind me using my right hand, but decided against this in case it might invalidate my warranty, so I did the only thing a man can do at a time like this...I went for a pint...no, sorry, I climbed over my computer desk, carefully avoiding the keyboard, modulator, monitor and other peripherals, and sneaked (snook?) up on my Amiga from behind and booted it while it wasn't looking. It never knew what hit it.

Soon I was riding high on the Amiga-go-round learning all about Utilities, Systems, CLIs and things. Then I got ambitious and got stuck into *Deluxe Paint II*. All went well for about another hour and then the system crashed...blank screen and total lock-up.

After rebooting and becoming immersed in the creation of multi-coloured spiders the thing crashed again; and again...It then became such a habitual routine that I decided to time the occurrence and discovered that the program crashed at 6.5 minute intervals exactly.

To cut a long story short is not my style, so I'll carry on... Anyway after much deliberation and gnashing of teeth I decided that *Deluxe Paint* must in fact be bug-ridden (looked up Rentokil in Yella Pages) and then I found out that Amiga Extras was bug-ridden... and that *Batman* was bug ridden...as was *Manic Miner* ...aaaaaaaarrrrrrrrgh...and then it struck me (ouch) – the dreaded virus! I'd read about these rampant RAM-eaters, these vector vampires, but I didn't know what to do about them so, after a whole night of high expectations and quick let downs, I followed the only option left open to me – I cried. I went to bed and dreamed of little creatures with sharp teeth eating at my programs and woke to find a mouse with legs – but no ball – chewing my Amiga Manual.

The story has a happy ending and I'd be grateful if you would say a big thank you to the staff at The Comp Shop in Liscard Road, Wallasey, who not only spent a lot of time and effort trying to imbue my meagre ability with some Amigability, but who took all my disks home and gave them a massive dose of antibiotic and made them all well again...and I hadn't even spent any money! "Three cheers for The Comp Shop, hip hip ...", oh, please yourself.

I've bought every mag on the market and have decided that the one for me is *Amiga Format*. I'll also be taking that weekly one but I won't soil your pages with its name in case you were thinking of sending me some kind of reward for this literary masterpiece...and not a worriedproccesor in sight.

Ian Heath
Merseyside

Thanks for supplying us with this month's entertaining letter , T-shirt and binder on the way.

Ugly Bug Ball

Whoooooooooops. May I report a bug in my ball point pen. While having the letters page open in November's *AF* I decided to load my *AF* Disc. It didn't work. Send it back said I and my trusty pen put: Monmouth Street, Bath, on the envelope. Can you put things right? After all my pen is controlled by a memory that's 77 years old. Perhaps this info could be added to the statistics that Mr Billing is asking for.

JE Roberts
Leicester

I have exactly the same problem with my ball point pens – they crash completely every time I try to write a cheque.

Think About The Future

I have just finished reading: "Get The Most Out Of Your Amiga", which landed on my doormat this morning. I found it a fascinating read, notwithstanding the occasional dubious use of English and the many misspellings – what happened to the vaunted spellcheckers? The book has certainly fired my enthusiasm for getting to grips with CLI – something I have been studiously avoiding since I got my A500 six months ago.

I have a couple of questions: firstly, will you be providing updates, and if so, how am I expected to incorporate them into the spiral-bound format?

Surely the long term credibility of this type of definitive publication demands regular revision and addenda, even if only on an annual basis (although, in my opinion, quarterly would be more like it). A ringbinder would have given you more flexibility to adopt this idea in the future, even if you have no plans in that direction at the moment.

Jim Curry
Surbiton, Surrey

We are considering updates to the book but they would take the form of a revised edition rather than doing bits at a time. However, we'll seriously consider your suggestion. We are also considering doing more volumes inaddition to "GTMOOYA" and the new "Screenplay book" – stay tuned.

Blinded by Amiga

Seeing as my children, aged 7 and 10, were using computers at school, I thought it would help them to have a computer at home and so, last year, I bought them an Amiga 500 for Christmas.

Both of them think it is a "brill" computer. However, I would like to point out that this is only from a games and *Deluxe Paint II* point of view, we don't use our computer for anything else.

I have bought *Amiga Format* since purchasing the computer in the hope of learning new techniques, but we have only managed to do a few simple things from your cover disks, because most things seem to "blind us with science", as they say. The children say why can't we do "this", but I don't understand them either. It must sound as though we are all as thick as two short planks but we are all quite bright really – including 40 year old mum who likes using the computer as much as the kids.

Now, I know the Amiga is capable of some fantastic things, but how does the absolute beginner learn about them? There must be books and disks around which could help us, but we don't know where to start. How about "Kids and the Amiga" – would this be any good? Please could you help us so that we can use the Amiga to its full potential.

Mrs. J. Ashford
Frome, Somerset

There are plenty of approaches you can take that will help you to get more from your Amiga, it just depends what you want to do with it. There are a growing number of educational programs that we review from time to time, if that's what you're after. However, a wider approach may be what you're after in which case there are any number of things worth exploring like programming, graphics, music, PD and so on – all of which have different starting points for the beginner.

We provide what beginners information we can but a full treatment is always easier to present as a self contained package. Once again it depends on exactly what you want but two approaches worth considering are our very own book "Get the Most Out of Your Amiga" which comes with two helpful disks or a new video tutorial called "The Amiga Tutor Video" from Audition Computer Services, which deals with setting up the machine and using Workbench. The video costs £19.99, is 1.5 hours long and is the first in what Audition hope will be a series of videos to help new owners, the second of which will deal with Deluxe Paint III. Audition ☎ 0780 55888 (shop hours).

The Sun has Got his Hat On

I regret to have to inform William Mobberly that the process used by his game, *Bee Bo Bertie*, has already been patented by none other than the Meteorological Society of Malaysia.

When the weather forecasting system was due for computerisation three years ago, by far the most economical solution was proposed by a local firm. The method that is now used is this: an expert inscribes technical symbols, denoting all possible Malaysian weather conditions, around the perimeter of the brown plastic stuff found inside a 3.5 inch floppy disk. When a forecast is desired, he inserts the disk into the computer and waits for a short period of time. Our experts develop a "feel" for the correct amount of time they have to wait. Once the period has expired, the expert removes the floppy disk from the drive and judges the next day's weather from the symbol appearing in the small window for the disk. Long range forecasts are made using 5.25 inch disks.

Here in Malaysia, all the symbols drawn around the perimeter of the disk are little suns and the forecast has had 100% accuracy!

Jane Sutcliffe
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

I hear the same system is also succesfully used in Wales – they just swap the sun signs for rain clouds.

Not so Jolly Roger

While I was browsing through a friend's magazine I noticed an article, which, I decided to scan through. I noticed that there were programmers, such as the Bitmap Brothers and teams like Bullfrog, making predictions about the future and what it holds.

After reading peoples' predictions I began to notice that two in every three stated that the Amiga market will collapse, due to piracy, and a move will be made towards consoles by the leading software houses. Now, if this is

the case, what will happen to the Amiga market? Will it go down hill? I can only expect so and hope not.

I have been the proud owner of an Amiga for nearly two years now and I firmly believe Commodore have brought along a machine, with some faults but mainly excellent qualities, into the computer industry.

Now the pirates amongst us are disintegrating the market which has been set up and enforced by Amiga owners. It is being abused by kids with a money problem, because that's all pirates are: people with not enough money to buy the games and not enough brain power to work out that by starving the programmers of an income (due to piracy), corners have to be cut and poorer quality games are produced. The games become less attractive and people with any sense hold onto their money awaiting a decent game.

Fortunately decent games seem to keep on coming, but for how long? When will people, such as the Bitmap Brothers, who have brought us some excellent games, move on to programming games for the consoles and abandon us Amiga owners?

Now I know this argument is as old as the Amiga-ST debate, if not older, but something needs to be done before the industry collapses around our ears, some sense needs to be talked into the pirates, if not, then beaten into them, because they are spoiling everyones' fun. How long will it take for them to realise this, probably too long, who knows?

Surely a way to stop pirates is to make the program and games accessible, but only if the user can enter a word from a certain page of the manual. This could be randomised and uses only a minute piece of memory.

Steve Stairs
Moulton, Northants

You'll find some informed speculation from programmers on what is going to happen to Amiga games in the coming year on our 'Visions of the Future' feature. I don't expect the consoles to take over – you have only to look at the continuing success of the Amiga to know that people want more than just games. The Amiga can provide games to rival any console and does things that they can't ever match because they don't have a keyboard and disk drives . Which of the consoles can boast graphics, music, video, wordprocessing, database, spreadsheet programs? Which of them has the thriving PD market that the Amiga has, that keeps us all entertained and involved quite cheaply?

There is a place for the consoles but they aren't going to take over from the Amiga, which will be around for many years yet.

Continuity Error

While I was reading the October edition of your magazine, I was shocked at the apparent absence of any consistency in the ratings of the games' reviews. In one particular review the ratings were, to say the least, diverse and varied.

I am of course referring to Mr. M. Evans' review of the new Virgin game: *"Monty Python's Flying Circus"*, where the Spam rating was used gratuitously and without remorse, not once – which would have been a serious enough offence for me to write – but no less than four times! To add insult to injury, the four ratings given were completely different, ranging from a pathetic 159 to a ridiculous 14250, which as we all know is the highest possible score! What intrigues me is the rating you would give to the sequel, if *"Flying Circus II"* were ever to be released, assuming that it would be of a better quality, what Spam rating would you use then? Any increase on 14520 would call for serious action to be taken, action which I myself would be proud to take – after which the "Head Ripped Off Sketch" and the "Spanish Inquisition" would look like "Danger Keep Left" signs!

You seem to have worked your way into a corner, out of which there is no escape! I would be most interested to hear Mr. Evans' response to these points and also on why my bedroom has recently been struck down by a plague of "Danger Keep Left" signs! I will now sign off with a rendition of the infamous Traffic Light song! "I like traffic lights, I like traffic lights, I like traffic lights...."

Roy Freman
Luton, Bedfordshire

PS I've written to Arnor asking them why the word Spam is not in the dictionary supplied with their word processor.

I'd like to start by welcoming Roy to the letters pages and hope he doesn't mind if I call him Bruce to save confusion. Now Bruce will be

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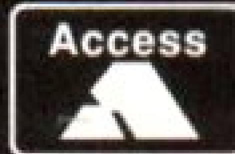
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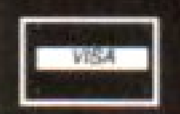
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writing letters about spam, the Spanish Inquisition, fish slapping, exploding cats, the twin peaks of Kilimanjaro, abattoir hotels and of course walnuts unbalancing you on a bicycle

Those are all Python sketches"

Ahhhhhhhh spit! New Bruce should be aware of the rules of the letters pages:

Rule one – no STs.

Rule two – anybody caught sober will have their letter marinaded in red wine and fed to the art department.

Rule three – no Spectrums.

Rule four – no writers shall indulge in illegal copying of other writers' jokes.

Rule five – no PCs.

Rule six – there is no rule six.

Rule seven – no Nintendos.

Gurumania

That's it, I'm reporting you to the RSPCG (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Guru's).

First of all you have the cheek to announce that you are going to throw this grey and balding gentleman, in long flowing robes, out onto the street. Fair enough, you pay the guy's wages even if he does meditate a whole lot better than an advert for an 'Amazing Bargain' in my opinion and is generally an all round nice guy.

Next he is made to give way to a page devoted to finding him a replacement (Issue 13).

Fair enough, sometimes something has got to go there instead, even if it is callous to start banging in the nails before the Guru is ready for his coffin, he is an OK balding guy, but even that doesn't give anyone the right to fit him for his wooden box.

But the final straw is that your magazine won't do the decent thing and put him out of his misery, one way or the other, i.e. a bullet or a bonus, but instead decides to strangle the old man over a period of months with the advertisers index...this is just plain cruel. Do the decent thing and save the Guru!

Mark Burbridge
Kent

PS I hear Commodore have already cut their budget and got rid of him, come on AF, you're his only hope!

...and one month later...

Mrs. Guru

I've just received my copy of AF in a rather tasteful polythene bag, nice colour, didn't match the sock's though. I ripped the bag open and immediately, if you can call half an hour immediate, whizzed to the back page to find my beloved Guru shrinking away to nothingness.

You paid my last letter no heed (alas). Not only did nice Mrs. Guru only get a quarter of a side but she also was given the smallest typewriter around. Was this to give her loyal readers eye strain? This wasn't a very nice ploy at all. Anyway despite your efforts we're both still here, that Dutch chap and I. All together now, we shall not, we shall not be moved...

Mark Butbridge
Kent

Actually the Guru isn't an old man at all but a young executive (of indeterminate sex) with a car phone, Porsche and a villa in Spain. They are (Guru is of course a collective being) also very much in favour of the ad index expanding as they feel it is the most valid means of expanding the consciousness of Amiga Format's collective mind and achieving a higher plain of understanding – which shows what they know. I say we kill it as slowly as possible. il will be an eighth of a page in our next issue

Escapist Realism

Firstly I would like to make a small correction to Robert Dowell's letter in Issue 16. The E-3A AWACS would be hard pushed to reach 40,000ft never mind 60,000. It's just a basic 707 airframe that has got a bloody great radar bolted on to its backside.

I think Robert is actually referring to the Lockhead TR-1 which does work in conjunction with the E-3, EA6 Prowler and the EF-111 to give the support, without which the F-17 wouldn't even be launched on a sortie.

Secondly The flight sims article in AF 16 was very interesting. I agree with Nigel Streeter that limitations of processing power and graphics will always restrict what the computer can do, but none of the sims that I have seen on the Amiga bear much resemblance to the actual flying characteristics of an aircraft. In a real aircraft, if you cut back on the power the nose drops, if you do a flick roll, the aircraft stays more or less on the

same heading. Surely it's not too difficult for software companies to write in some basic aerodynamics into the sims.

The only one that comes anywhere close is *F-18* and that has some horrific faults. I am an instructor in the aviation field and have "flown" fighter sims and I do not exaggerate when I say that some of the Amiga sims are harder to fly and land than the real thing! Of course, the gameplay is everything and there wouldn't be much point in producing a realistic sim that had the interest level of four tons of gravel, but it does seem a shame that a vast amount of effort goes into making these games playable at the expense of the realism factor.

Finally, have you thought about compiling a disk of tips and cheats for some of the "older but good" games? Nothing special, just text files so that you could cram a few on the Coverdisk. Not for me of course, but for my son you understand...

Mr DJ Wilson
Wolves

I can well believe that sims are harder to fly than the real thing, after all what you want from real planes is something that's as easy and safe to fly as possible. Even in combat situations the flying to and from the fighting zone will be relatively boring – it's the action and tactics we want not the sitting and waiting.

As for your final point, check out the "Screenplay" book, it may well provide what you need.

Grow Up, Daddy!



Last year Father Christmas brought me an Amiga 500. Daddy has bought a printer and what he calls an expansion board. This year I want a doll's-house. Daddy says that Father Christmas might bring me a "Hard Drive" for the Amiga instead. What is a Hard Drive? I want a doll's-house! Besides, I can never get on the Amiga. Daddy is always using it or playing on it. He is far too old to play. He must be thirty, at least.

Daddy always buys your magazine and reads it for a week. I like the pictures. Please print this so that when daddy reads it, he will tell Father Christmas that I want a doll's-house. If daddy wants a "Hard Drive" he can ask Father Christmas himself!

I love Sim City.

Mummy helped me with the long words, and Michael printed it out for me.

Louise Melling
(Aged 8)
Cumbria

PS Mummy says I have to give you lots of kisses if you print this. She is fed up with daddy and the Amiga as well!

Well we can't stretch to a hard drive and I'm too embarassed to go and buy a doll's house so have a T-shirt and binder instead, and tell daddy you'll scream until you're sick unless you get a doll's house – it always worked for me.

Is It Fated?

On October 20th I purchased the magazine: *New Computer Express* and on page 18 there was an article that stated the following 'I can exclusively reveal that the Amiga model 2000 is to face the chop'.

I was going to purchase an Amiga B2000 V6.2 and I am now in a quandary about buying it. Could you tell me if the B2000 is going to be taken off the market by Commodore and when?

If this is the case would it be unwise to buy the B2000? Would software and hardware manufacturers stop producing their products? Would shops and mail order companies stop selling B2000 compatible soft and hardware? Will the B2000 suffer the same fate as the A1000?

I would be grateful for any advice because I am only 16 and I would not want to waste that amount of money for a computer that is only going to be of use for a few months.

Michael Wedding
Hartlepool, Cleveland

Whatever happens buying a B2000 would not be a mistake in itself. Commodore have not announced any plans to scrap the 2000, it seems to be one possibility but any suggestion of it so far is just idle speculation. Even if they do existing 2000s do not instantly become obsolete because they can run any of the software that the A500 or A1500 can and can be expanded in exactly the same manner. The real question you should be asking yourself is whether the new

A1500 fulfils your needs at a lower price than the 2000, if it does then that should be the option to go for. Don't worry about obsolesence, just value for money and satisfying your needs – even the old A1000 still happily runs most software and has by no means become unusable.

Edge of the Law

I'm not on the side of pirates, but, I don't agree with your reply,in Issue 16, to A Barber where you stated that he's still breaking the law by accepting a pirate copy of a game, even though he has an original copy.

A while ago I bought *Xenon II*, from a local computer shop, and it failed to load on my Amiga. I took it back to the store and it also failed to load on their machine.

They replaced it with a copy that was tested on their Amiga. That too failed to load on my machine so I sent the disks to Mirrorsoft stating what machine I had and what Kickstart. Then about a month later I received a compliment slip and program disks back (whether they were replacements or my original disks I don't know). Anyway you would not believe what happened next. They wouldn't load. A friend then gave me a cracked copy of the game that loads fine. The point is, how can you crack down on pirates when in some cases they can do what the original manufacturer fails to do? In my case I would have wasted £25 if it hadn't been for the "pirated" version.

Since I own the original copy, the manual and packaging I class the copies as "Back-up" for my own personal use – even if I didn't "Back-up" the disks myself.

Mr MJ Van-Ferde
Brighton, East Sussex

You are talking about two separate issues. If the loading system on Xenon II *is such that it won't load on your Amiga then I'm afraid that is a problem for Mirrorsoft themselves, but by obtaining a cracked copy you are still receiving stolen goods whether you acttually paid for an original of the game or not.*

Whether you are in fact morally right or not is another question entirely. But it is a simple fact that by receiving a pirate copy of a game someone (even you) breaks the law.

Pussy-footing

I have to say that with regards to the *Amiga Format* 16 Coverdisk, I was less than thrilled to find that 172K of the disk's contents were devoted to the correction of a barrow-load of bugs involving Mandarin's AMOS, and we haven't finished yet have we? To follow was RAMOS (was this bugged as well?) Just what the blue blazes is going on here?

If a Software Company issues faulty goods, it is surely incumbent upon them to put its own house in order, and moreover, at their own expense. By utilising, for it's own purpose, Coverdisk 16 it is using disk space that I have paid good money for, a point that applies even to owners of the ill-fated AMOS, for even these unfortunates have the legal and moral right to have their faulty goods replaced without getting involved in additional costs.

Simply put, non-AMOS owners have had to pay (in one way or another) for corrections to a program which they do not own and maybe have no intention of ever buying.

It seems to me that you are not exactly blameless in this affair. Your Coverdisk blurb advertised, and I quote: "AMOS UPDATER, Mandarin's Free New Features". However, on turning to page 98 of the mag, it transpires that, as far as I can see, that probably 18 of the 25 so called features are in fact bug corrections. If this is the case, and I am open to discussion, what we have here is around 170K of corrections, not updates.

When Activision released the faulty version of *Bomber* – the final two missions could not be accessed – they replaced all returned discs with a new boxed game, postage and packing FOC.

If Mandarin ever hope to build a reputation that future buyers can depend on, it is surely time they started acting responsibly, rather than appearing to be pussy-footing around with third party options that at best will only reach those owners who happen to buy *Amiga Format.*

Tony Melling
Cheshire

AMOS has sold in large numbers, enough we think to justify devoting some disk space to it. It is unfortunate that not everyone could make use of the update, but we try to provide a range of contents on the disk that gives something of



interest to everyone.As for it being just bug corrections, I would be interested to hear what other AMOS users think – should Mandarin have provided it as a free upgrade?

Fair Share

Your August issue carried an excellent program called *PopUpMenu*. I tried this, decided it was very good (I'm using it now with *Kind Words*) and wrote off to the author with my shareware donation. He very kindly wrote back with some interesting information, as follows:

a) The version on your Coverdisk has a tiny bug which could actually crash users' Amigas;

b) At the time I wrote to him several weeks after getting that issue of *AF* – he had not received any other letters from readers;

c) There are more recent versions available from him which are bug-free.

I can't believe that I'm the only one of your 40,000 or so purchasers who found that program useful. Even if only 1% did so, that would still be 400! So why wasn't Martin's postman complaining about enormous sackfuls of mail that he had to deliver? You don't think, do you, that your readers are using the program without sending off their shareware fees? Surely not...well, I guess they are. How much sympathy do you think I've got for them when it crashes taking out their two-hour WP edit session? – That's right, not a lot!

Fortunately this story has a happy ending. Martin is no longer a penniless (or Krona-less, seeing as he's Swedish) student but has obtained gainful employment. He's now happy to place the program in the public domain.

Tom Burke
Sheffield

Shareware has always been open to abuse but the more honest folk like yourself that contribute will help make sure it continues. If it doesn't we risk losing an important area of public domain software. Demos are all very well, but it would be a great shame if we were to lose the supply of such useful software.

As Good As Gazza

I have had, for some seasons, players in my Player Manager team who have been at the peak of their profession. We have won at least one of the league and cup titles for the last 20 seasons. Why then hasn't one of my players been selected for international duty? I was hoping, now Bobby Robson has gone, a fresh approach would have been taken, but, once again, in the match against Hungary it was the same old faces.

Now a quick question, is there any significance in the fact that the new game from Bullfrog, Powermonger, has a name which rhymes with the now famous Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles exclamation: "Cowabunga"?

I was looking back at the very first issue of Amiga Format and I noticed that it was a whopping 116 pages long. In view of the fact that the October issue is a staggering 220 pages long, will my postman be asking for a bigger sack or maybe even a van by this time next year?

My Top 10 ideas for new games:

1. ***First Time Buyer* (collect the keys – and then get them repossessed a few months later).**
2. ***Leeds United* (a beat-em-up).**
3. ***Manic Miner* (Arthur Scargill RPG).**
4. ***Pirate to Pirate Brain Transplant* (space trading – geddit?)**
5. ***10 Downing St.* (a *Dragon's Lair* clone).**
6. ***George Best* (graphic adventure, but sadly the main character is rather hard to control).**
7. ***Saddam Hussein's Middle East Conquest* (fantasy role-playing game).**
8. ***Operation Stealth II* (come home ratted and get past the missus).**
9. ***Fire and Forget III* (Mrs.Thatcher cabinet reshuffle simulator).**
10. ***Days of Thunder II* (vindaloo sim).**

Ken Blackburn
Nottingham

Anybody else got a top ten?



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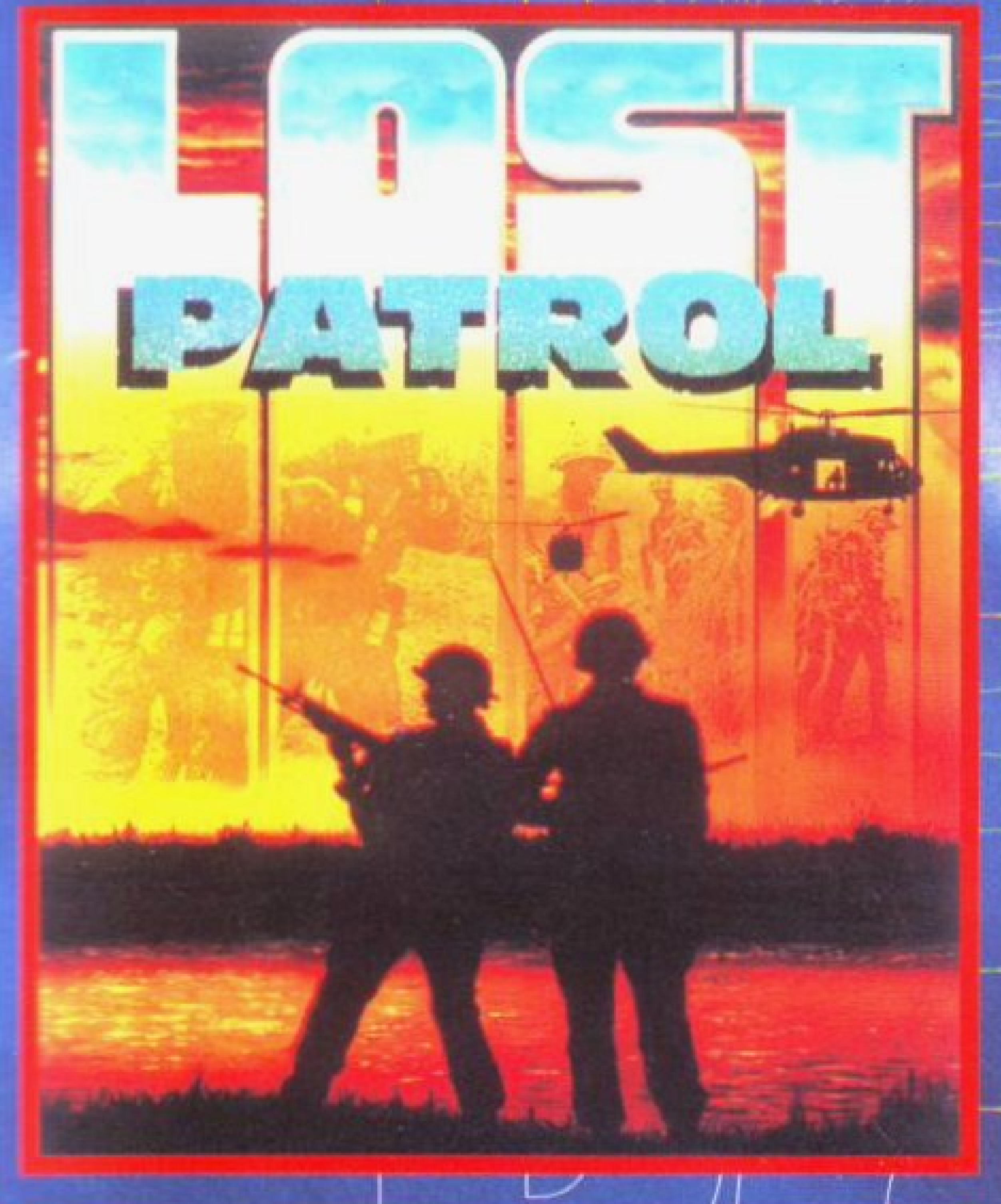
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